

THE
REASONABLENESS
OF
Personal Reformation,
And the
NECESSITY
OF
CONVERSION;

The true Methods of making all
Men happy in this World, and in
the World to come. Seasonably dis-
coursed, and earnestly pressed upon this
Licentious Age.

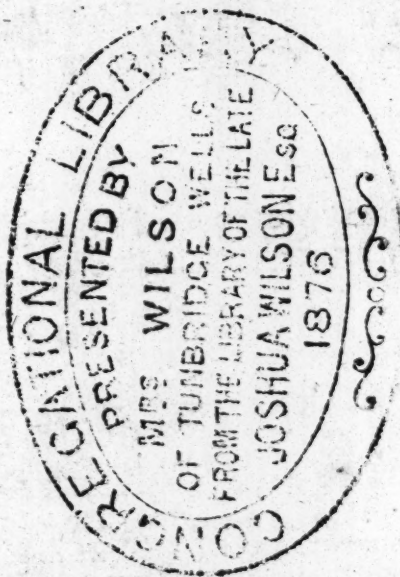
By J. F. A sincere lover of his Native
Countrey, and the Souls of Men.

Levit. 26. 23, 24, 25. *And if ye will not be reformed by these things, but will walk contrary unto me: then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my Covenant.*

Isa. 48. 18. *Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my Commandments! then had thy peace been as a River, and thy righteousness as the waves of the Sea.*

L O N D O N:

Printed for Thomas Cockertill, at the Three Legs
in the Poultry, over against the Stocks-Market. 1691.



To

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To all such as are most immediately and particularly concerned in the following Treatise, of what Rank or Quality soever they be.

Gentlemen,

TWO of the greatest, faithful-
lest, and most intimate Friends
in the World, *Reason* and *Conscience*,
command me here in their Names,
courteously to salute and invite
you in.

They earnestly desire three or
four Hours serious and private con-
ference with you about some very
important Personal Concerns of
yours, which cannot admit of deni-
al, or long delay. And if you
make any trifling excuses, they have
commanded and instructed me here
to answer them.

The Epistle

In case of absolute and obstinate refusal to hear them, they order me to tell you, If you will not talk with them now, they'll talk with you shortly whether you will or no. If you say, you are not now at leisure, having other business to do ; they both desire you to consider, *First*, You can have no Business in the World of equal importance with theirs. *Secondly*, That whatever other lawful Affairs you are pursuing, their Business with you will no way obstruct, but greatly promote it. And *Lastly*, That a greater Person than any of you lost his Life by pocketing up a Letter at Night, saying, *To morrow is a new Day* ; and it proved to him indeed *Dies novissima*, his last Day, he losing by that Neglect the only Opportunity of living longer.

If you demand how your Reason came to be bound up in this little Book, and say, That which is Reason
to

Dedicatory.

to this Author, may be folly and non-sense to you ; I am bid to tell you, you are obliged first to read and compare, else your own Reason will presently call it your own folly and non-sense so to pronounce. Sound Reason is uniform, and like it self all the World over. Its true Laws and Dictates equally oblige one, as another, in like cases and circumstances.

If you say, there have been some Jars and Disgusts betwixt you, and your Reasons and Consciences ; you and they have fallen out so oft, that you have no great fancy to come near them in private, for you expect nothing but harsh and chideing Language from them, and therefore are fain by continual Diversions and quick Successions of Business, to maintain your Peace, by keeping at as great a distance from them as you can.

The Epistle

'Tis their desire you should here know, *First*, That their debates with you will be as calm and friendly, as they are seasonable and necessary. *Secondly*, That they both profess (and you may believe them) they neither do, nor can design any thing but your good. *Thirdly*, That that Person is certainly in a very bad Case, that cannot endure to converse with himself. *Fourthly*, That you herein deny a Civility to your own Reasons and Consciences, which you daily pay to Strangers and Inferiors. And in a Word, that they desire a reconciliation with you, upon as fair and honourable terms, as can well be desired. And that this being done, they will both stick faithfully by you in all the troubles and dangers of your Lives, and follow you as your inseparable Friends, into any thing but Sin.

If

Dedictory.

If you say, This is but a Wheedle to draw you into a Book, that will make you melancholy, and perhaps mad.

'Tis their Sense and Judgment, that of all men living, you have least reason to pretend the one or the other in this Case. For they are very confident you are now in the most Melancholy circumstances men can ordinarily be in on this side Hell. And for Madnesse, they desire to know what you your selves would call that man, that is running with such post-haste to Hell (as will not admit of two or three hours stop upon the Road) to prove himself to be no Mad-man, but in his right mind and wits?

Moreover, they command me to inform you, It is their desire, that seeing their debates with you will neither be tiresome nor impertinent, you will please to hear them out what

The Epistle, &c.

they have to say to you; and then if you shall find cause to complain that your Pleas and Excuses are not fairly drawn, or that you have new Matter to furnish a better Apology, they are both content you shall have your liberty to amend or add what you please; and if they be not able to refute them, they'll give you no further trouble or interruption in your course.

This, Gentlemen, is what I have in charge to say to you in the *Porch*; and now if you please, the Door is open; you may be as private as you will. They'll attend you to your Bed-chamber or Closet; and I heartily wish an happy issue to this friendly debate.

J. F.

T H. E

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OF THE
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THE
REASONABLENESS
OF

Personal Reformation,

CHAP. I.

The Introduction and State of the Case.

SECT. I.

Reason exalts Man above all earthly Be-
ings: 'Tis his Dignity and Priviledge
that God hath furnished him with Abi-
lities of Mind to recollect, animadvert,
compare, infer, ponder and judge his own Asti-
ons. Hereby he becomes not only capable of
Moral Government by Humane Laws, which no
Creature beside him is; but also of Spiritual Go-
vernment by Divine Laws; and the blessed Fru-
ctions of God in Glory, which no other Species of
Creatures (Angels only excepted) have a subje-
ctive capacity for.

Right Reason by the Law of Nature (as an
home-born Judge) arbitrates and determines all
things within its proper Province, which Pro-

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vince

vince is extended far and wide. All Action Reason Natural, Moral and Civil are weighed at this divine Beam and Standard: None are exempted but matters of supernatural Revelation; and yet even these are not wholly and in every respect exempt from Right Reason. For though there be some Things and Mysteries in Religion above the sphere and flight of Reason, yet nothing can be found in Religion which is unreasonable.

And though these Mysteries be not of natural Light investigation, but of supernatural Revelation, yet Reason is convinced nothing can be more unreasonable, than that it take its place at the feet of Faith, which is but to suffer it self to become a *Pupil* to an Omniscient and Infallible Instructor of Reason. The resolution of our Reason into Faith, and more of Faith into God's Veracity, are Acts highly becoming Reasonable Beings in such Cases as these.

It may not pry too nicely into unrevealed Mysteries, demand the Reasons, or examine the Causes of them, (as bold and daring *Socinians* do), but it feels it self obliged to receive all those things both as possible and true which God hath revealed, counting his Revelation alone to be Reason sufficient. For the *Veracity* of God takes out of Reason's mouth all Objections against the truth of them, and his Almighty Power silences all its Scruples against the possibility of them.

But in all Matters properly under the jurisdiction of Reason, every man is obliged to account with himself, as well as others, for the reasonableness of his own Actions; and that Act which will not endure the test of sound Reason, is judged not fit for the entertainment of a Man. Then, Reason

Action Reason cannot justify it, 'tis beneath the rank and
at the dignity of a Man to do it.

S E C T. II.

The Light of Reason was at first the bright
Lamp or Candle of the Lord, till Sin like a Thief
melted it down to a Snuff; whereby (compara-
tively speaking) it is become a poor glimmering
Light in the best of men, and almost quite extin-
guished in some men. Fallen Man is become
more less than himself, and will never act like himself,
till he be fully restored to himself.

Sanctification indeed snuffs and trims the Lamp
of Reason; but there being few sanctified Persons
among men, a double Misery consequently be-
falls a very great part of Mankind: whose Con-
fession speaks them not only destitute of Religi-
on, which bereaves them of the blessedness of the
World to come; but men almost entirely despoil-
ed of the Benefits and Blessings of their own Rea-
son, which makes them unhappy and miserable
in this World: Beasts, rather than Men, as the sa-
cred Scripture styles them: Unreasonable men,
suffice fallen out with their own faculties, who as-
sail many a sharp battle with their Reason, are
now dragging it like a conquered Captive, at
the Chariot-wheels of their victorious and trium-
phant Lusts.

S E C T. III.

'Tis scarce imaginable that ever Sin should pre-
vail so far as it doth to the very unmaning of
Man. Then, did they not first delude and bribe their
Reason

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Reason

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Reason by close and cunning Application their bewitched Affections; whereby thought cannot make it a *party*, yet they make it stand as a silent Spectator or *Neuter*, whilst they act as a Beast, yea, the Devil rather than the Man.

We little know how far unsanctified Reason may this way be prevailed upon to quit its Throne and resign its Scepter into the hands of Lust and appetite; yea, to engage in the defence of the most absurd Laws and Dictates. It only serves some men to invent excuses, pleas and specious pretences, to justify or extenuate their beastly actions; the basest servitude it can be condemned to.

If this will not do, sensual Lusts have another way to obtain their satisfaction in despite of Reason and Conscience, even by stopping their ears to the voices of both, and pushing on with a blind *impetus*, they suffer neither to enjoy the opportunity of a calm debate of these matters with them.

S E C T. IV.

But let men do what they will, 'tis next to impossibility they should so far subdue and destroy those inbred Principles of Reason and Conscience, but that they will at one time or other give them some checks and oppositions in their profane courses, especially when they shall get the advantage of some eminent distress, or special danger; which disposes them to lend an ear to the voices; and there be few men in the World but are sometimes providentially cast into such cases and conditions.

Applications by though the make it stand self they act the Man. Justified Reason quit its Throne of Lust and presence of the only serves and specious their beast-like be condemn have another despite of Reasoning their ears with a br enjoy the matters wi

So that appeals to the Reason of the most pro-
 digate wretches are not altogether vain and use-
 less. For if the case cannot be tryed and decided
 at the bar of Reason and Conscience one time, it
 may with more advantage at another; and haply
 Appeals to Reason may produce Reformation in
 some men, sooner than Appeals to the Scriptures,
 or Principles of Faith; especially when the World
 is so notoriously drenched in practical Atheism,
 that serious Religion becomes the common subject
 of drollery amongst multitudes of men.
 Yet it were hard and uncharitable to imagine
 any man sunk so deep into the mire of bestiality
 and profaneness, as not still to retain some value
 and veneration for his own Reason, and as much
 as he abuses it, yet to refuse the whole world in
 exchange for it; and to account it a greater mi-
 sery to be utterly deprived of it, than to have the
 hoofs of an Horse given him in exchange for his
 Hands and Feet.

S E C T. V.

'tis next to appeal to the Reason of Sinners, and design their
 reformation by such Appeals. For it being a most
 shameful thing for a man to be convicted at the
 bar of his own Reason, of acting like a beast ra-
 ther than a man, every man is presumed to be a-
 fraid and ashamed of such an Indictment. Such
 Miscreants are the shame and reproach of Huma-
 nity it self. They are branded for bruits through-
 out the sober world. Their company declined
 and shun'd by all wise and good men. He that
 hath no reason to justify his actions, may yet be

supposed to be owner of some stock of natural shame, which cannot but afford a blush upon a plain conviction. This therefore was the case which the Prophet *Isaiab* took by divine direction to reform the idolatrous *Israelites*, *Isa. 46. 8.* states the case at the bar of their own Reason, calls for a verdict upon it. The case was this; *Whether Idols having not power enough to shew themselves Gods, those that worship them must not want wisdom enough to shew themselves men? Remember this, shew your selves men, and bring it again to mind, O transgressors! q. d. for shame let not men act brutishly, which have no animadversion.*

S E C T. VI.

When things therefore are brought to such an exigence, that ruin or reformation is the only Choice men have to make, and all religious professions so obliterated and worn out, that men pay no reverence to them; an Appeal to the Reason of men seems then to be an hopeful method of prevailing with them, to suffer a reformation rather than a ruin. Not that I imagine the *Topick* of Reason able to afford more powerful Arguments than those of Religion do; but that they who by their ignorance, and strong prejudices against Religion, have made themselves more incapable of conviction that way, may haply feel the force of Reason prevailing so far, at least, as to restrain their outrageous lusts under some restraint.

As for the Scriptures, and serious Religion gotten by them in the souls of men, they are perfect strangers to all, but the names of these things. And even their very Names are grown almost di-

of k of nature ridiculous with them too. But Reason may convince and shame them. What force the Reason was the course of man hath, even without saving grace, to provide direction, to produce Civility, Sobriety, and other Moral Vertues, *Isa. 46. 8.* It is abundantly evident in the very *Heathens*, who by the only Light of Reason discovered so much of the odiousness in Vice and Immorality, and such a comely beauty in Justice, Temperance, and the other Moral Vertues, that their praises for them are sounded throughout the world.

Now whatever unthinking men dream, to me it is evident, that when Kingdoms and Commonwealths are overflowed with unrestrained Vices and Immoralities; when cursing and swearing becomes the common Language; Drunkenness and Adultery the common practices of the Inhabitants; God will either sweep away the filth of those Nations by the Besom of a general Reformation, or he will sweep away their Inhabitants out of them with the Besom of Destruction. For if we have not excus'd the Notion and Belief of a God, and that he animadverts the wickedness of men (which the very *Heathens* by the Light of Nature, saw and acknowledged) we may thereby easily be led to this Conclusion, that such overflowsings of abomination do, and must certainly preface our Desolation, except speedy and general Reformation do prevent it.

S E C T. VII.

Now the persons whose Reformation I particularly design by this method, being men that exercise more Reason than Religion, might (methinks) be prevailed with to take up at last, and reform.

reform their unreasonable as well as ungodly courses, could they be once prevailed with to debate these matters with cool, considerative mind, becoming men governed by reason, not who are swayed like brut-beasts by lust and appetite.

And is it not highly reasonable, that men should weigh their own actions at the same beam and standard where they weigh other mens actions, and renounce all that with shame and detestation which they themselves must censure as uttered beneath and unworthy of a man? Wherefore has God planted a principle of Reason and Conscience within us? Is it rational to think it was planted there for no other end or use but to scan and censure other mens words and actions by, but not our own? Or to be wholly useful to other mens interests, without any benefit to our selves? Ask thine own Reason, silly man, why God placed it in thy Soul, and for what use it was intended, and it will tell thee, it was particularly designed and appointed to regulate and order thine own life and actions; and next, for the benefit and good of the Community. It will tell thee, that it is not a single act thou dost of any weight or moment, but thou oughtest to consult with it, and have its Pass or License before thou do it. But when thou entrest into a series and course of actions, thy consultations with it ought to be very frequent and solemn, because these things are of great importance to thee.

Thy Reason will tell thee, Sinner, that it is a vile affront to it, to be thrust by thee from the Council-table, unworthily dismissed from its office, and discharged from any further attendance upon thy life, and the concerns thereof, and brutish

as ungodly lust and appetite consulted in its room ; and
 failed with that it needed not at all to have been implanted
 into thy soul, if the same Principles that govern
 the beasts of the field must also be thy governing
 Principles. It stands ready to offer its service to thee,
 to save thee from, or to receive thee out of those
 mischiefs thou hast or mayest run thy self into ; if
 thou wilt but hear and obey its advice. It tells
 thee, it is thy Privy-Councillor by God's appoint-
 ment ; and if thou wilt not find leisure among the
 heats and hurries of thy lusts, to consult it, and
 hearken to its counsels now ; if thou wilt forsake
 the conduct of thine own Reason and Conscience,
 which have a right and authority to govern thy
 words and actions, and follow thy blind and head-
 strong lusts and passions, thou shalt hear other lan-
 guage from them, when thy lusts have precipi-
 tated thee into thine own ruin and destruction,
 as they speedily and inevitably must and will
 do, according to the course they now steer for
 thee.

S E C T. VIII.

And there is yet more ground to hope, that rea-
 son may prevail with men living under the Gospel,
 to return to sobriety and temperance, when we
 consider their Reason is assisted by some illumina-
 tion from the Christian Religion. They live in
 a Land of Bibles and Ministers, where they can-
 not avoid the light ; an advantage far beyond what
 ever the *Heathens* enjoyed, who yet by their single
 unassisted Reason arrived to an eminency in Moral
 Vertues.

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Our Reasons and Consciences do not only convince us (as theirs also did them) that there is God, and a future life of retribution, wherein every man shall be judged according to his works; but also, that the Scriptures are the very Word of God, and Rule of Faith and Manners. And there be any among the debauched Crew that question or deny it, we may be confident none of them are able by plain and sound reason to overthrow those mighty Arguments pleaded for the confirmation of that truth. At least they find in themselves a strong suspicion, and fear, that they may prove to be true; which jealousy and suspicion working together with their own Reason and Consciences, are no contemptible helps towards their recovery.

For if what Reason, Conscience and Scripture with one mouth pronounce, be true and certain (as undoubtedly it will be found to be) then it must be plain and obvious to them also, that their brutish lusts have put them into the direct and ready way both to ruin *themselves*, and also greatly to hazard the *Community to which they belong*.

S E C T. IX.

As for themselves, if they will make a judgment upon their own condition in the light of Reason, Conscience, or Scripture, (and they very well know they take their measures in perfect darkness, if they take them not by this direction) then continuing the same course they now do, they are a lost generation.

All their lawful and faithful guides tell them with one mouth, they are certainly in the broad way

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way to damnation. And that how irksome and terrible soever the thoughts and apprehensions of Hell are to them, yet thither they must certainly come, if they pursue this course. Their Reason plainly tells them, he that chuseth the means, and engageth in the way leading to Hell, must and ought to make account that Hell is the place he is preparing for.

Conscience is as plain and positive with them, that they must either return or perish. The Scripture confirms the testimonies of both, by telling them plainly, that *the end of these things is death*, Rom. 6. 21.

'Tis down-right folly and madness, by the vote of the whole rational and sober world, for any man to conclude, or hope he shall be happy in the world to come, whose life is drawn through and finished in all manner of obscenity, filthiness, and prophaneness in the present world.

For let the case be brought into the light of your own Reason, as dim as it is, and let it freely judge when you are belching out your black and horrid Blasphemies against God, imprecating damnation from him upon your own souls, wallowing in beastly lusts, vomiting and roaring in Taverns and Alehouses: Ask, I say, your own Reason, Conscience, or the Scripture, whether all or either of them will allow you to say or think, *Now we are in the right way to eternal blessedness? This is the very course that will bring us to happiness in the world to come: This pleaseth God better, and is a surer path to glory, than Repentance or Faith, Mortification, Prayer, or Reformation.* No, no; as blind as your Reason is, and as seared as your Consciences are, you will never bring them to comprobate or sub-

subscribe such absurd and horrid conclusion these.

But on the contrary, they will tell you, That you will have the pleasure, you must have pain and torment of sin. That 'tis madness to you are afraid to burn, but not afraid to sin: That you are loath to be damned, and yet challenge Almighty God to his face to damn you; as much as folly as to drink a baneful Dose of known Poison, and think to feel no painful gripes afterwards.

As for the Scriptures, they appeal to the Reason of men in this case, as a most known and allowed thing, scarce imaginable to lie hid from a man, 1 Cor. 6. 9. *Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.*

It would make the bowels of a compassionate Christian to rowl and yearn within him to behold multitudes of souls of invaluable worth, running greedily on to their eternal ruin, wilfully stopping their ears all the way to the voices of their own Reason and Conscience, as well as to the voice of God in his word, not once making a pause till they fall into that gulph of eternal and intolerable misery, into which with great precipitation they are casting themselves.

S E C T. X.

And then for the Community to which they be-
 madness to say, how dangerous, yea, how destructive such
 d to sin: That persons are to it, cannot possibly be hid from any
 challenge the wife and serious observer. For if one Sinner destroys
 you; as much much good, if one *Achan* trouble the whole
 f known Poi-Camp of *Israel*, how much more will whole swarms
 gripes after-and droves of drunkards, blasphemers and adul-
 terers, as now fill every place, pull down the judg-
 to the Reasonments of God upon those States and Kingdoms
 n and allow-wherein they breathe? If our fears and dangers were
 id from any greater than they are, yet Reformation might save
 he unrighteous: *Jer. 5. 1. Run ye to and fro through the streets*
not deceived, of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the
dulterers, nor in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, (i. e. a
with mankind, publick man, a man in authority) if there be any
ards, nor re- that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and
the Kingdom of will pardon it. And if our hopes and confiden-
 es were much higher than they are, yet unre-
 ompassionate-ained sin would undo us. Kingdoms and Com-
 him to be- no-wealths are not so much endangered by the
 e worth, run- powers and policies of their enemies without them,
 in, wilfully as they are by the unreformedness of profligate
 ices of their wretches within and amongst them. Reforma-
 l as to the tion quickly recovers the Ancient Glory of
 ing a pause, Kingdoms, and makes them the terror of their
 and intole- Enemies.
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For tho there will be still too much sin private-
 ly committed under the best Laws, and most vi-
 gorous and impartial execution of them; yet abun-
 dance of sin would thereby be prevented, and the
 sins that are committed would not become Natio-
 al, but personal only, and these would not so much
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S E C T.

concern and hazard the publick weal and tranquility of the State.

Moreover, States and Kingdoms are in no hazard by the publick debauchery and comprophaneness of their Subjects, for as much as this very sink and puddle of their lusts, the mawdlinity, the want of wisdom, sprightly courage, and true gallantry of their Subjects are quenched and drowned, Spirits softened and effeminated. 'Tis hard to imagine those men will engage far in the Cause of Reformation, when Reformation it self is the thing they hate and fear.

Nor need we wonder to find men intemperate and low-spirited in times and places of eminent danger, who not only carry about them so much guilt (which is the fountain of fear) but are wholly addicted to sensual pleasures which they are too much to hazard upon publick accounts and considerations, these being the only Heaven they have to hope for; *Whoredom and Wine, and new Wine to way the heart*, Hof. 4. 11. 'Tis in the very nature of these sins to make men sottish, and in the nature of guilt to make them pusillanimous.

Seneca observes (and his Observation is true) *That the conscience of a wicked man is a terrible scourge and torments him perpetually lashing him with scrupulous thoughts and fears, so that he distrusts all security and knows not where to be safe.* Hence it comes to pass, that many men of good Extraction, Liberal Education, and Excellent Natural Endowment become so useless, yea, so pernicious as they who could they be recovered but to temperance and sobriety, would become both excellently useful and ornamental to the Nation where they

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al and tranquil their birth, and to the safety and honour whereof they owe their service.

S E C T. XI.

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This most desirable recovery and reformation of prophane debauched persons, is not simply and absolutely impossible: And if Magistrates and Ministers were every where exemplary themselves for the Cause of Sobriety and piety, zealous and impartial in the discharge of their respective Duties, a general Reformation would not be difficult. But when those, whose Office it is to suppress wickedness, shall associate themselves with leud and profligate persons, and vye with them in their prophane courses, or discourage more consciencious persons in the discharge of their Duties; this makes Reformation morally impossible.

If Prophaneness were once found the general Odium of the people, and a bar to all Preferments, it might be hoped things would quickly alter for the better. 'Twas an ancient custom among the *Heathens* (as Learned and Excellent Mr. *Hale* of *Eaton*, out of *Chrysostom* observes) that if a man offered himself to contend in the *Olympick-Games*, he was not permitted so to do, till Proclamation had been first made, whether any man knew him to be either a Servant, or a man of infamous Life; and if any such Imputation were proved against him, it was sufficient to keep him back, let his skill be what it would.

What care was here taken that their Vanities should not be discredited! And will neither Reason nor Religion convince us, that not only equal, but far greater care ought to be taken to discourage

rage prophaneness among Christians, than blind Heathens ever took to preserve the reputation of their vain Exercises? Let all subordinate Ministers of State, and Officers in the Church, consider how great a part of this blessed Reformation is demanded to their hands.

S E C T. XII.

Were Kingdoms and Commonwealths purged from that spirit of prophaneness and bauchery, which thus defiles and overflows them, and the people generally reduced but to civility, sobriety and temperance, experience would quickly shew them the comfortable effects and happy fruits thereof.

For though this be much short of what Christianity exacts from all its professors, and insufficient to obtain the happiness of the world to come, yet it is greatly conducent to the civil happiness and flourishing of the Kingdoms of this world, and therefore richly worth the studies and endeavours of all men to promote and obtain it.

There is no Kingdom or Commonwealth in the Christian world, which would not by this means breed and send forth multitudes more than they do, with excellent abilities and qualifications fitting them to sit at the Helm of Government, and steer a more prosperous course than they do at present. A wise and steady direction of the arduous and important affairs of Kingdoms, can only be expected from those that are able to govern themselves, and their own affairs, with sobriety and discretion.

If the Laws of Nations take care for the preservation and growth of *Timber* fit for the building of Houses and Ships, and every one sees the usefulness and necessity of such acts; much more ought they to take care for such an education of men, as may render them serviceable members to the State both in *Camp* and *Council*.

Magistrates are (in a Sense) the foundation of Kingdoms, the strong Shoulders that bear the burden of Government; and reason will tell, that so great a weight and stress as the Affairs and Concerns of Kingdoms, ought not to be laid on their Shoulders, whose Legs through debauchery are too weak to bear their own reeling and staggering Bodies.

Seamen and Soldiers are the Walls of Kingdoms, and under God their Prudence and Courage are the Peoples defence and safeguard. *Plutarch* tells us, there were two Virtues in *Hannibal* which made him prosperous and successful. There was in him *plurimum audacia ad capienda pericula, & plurimum consilii inter ipsa pericula*. He was bold in attempting, and prudent in managing the most difficult Services; the former had signified little without the latter. Courage may throw Men into the midst of difficulties, but Counsel and Wisdom helps them to emerge those difficulties; and I'm sure that cannot be rationally expected from Men that daily dethrone their own Reason by debauchery.

But when Men not only sober, just and temperate, but religiously good, are employed in publick Trusts and Services, we cannot but think the Security and Prosperity of such a State are abundantly provided for. And our confidence heretofore

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is not only founded upon the *Maxims* of Human Reason, but of Scripture, Wisdom, and Authority also.

What a renowned, prosperous, and successful Captain of the Armies of *Israel* was good *Joshua*! No Man was able to stand before him all the time of his Life, *Josh.* 1. 5. But what bred those brave and gallant and undaunted spirits in the breast of this Heroe, and crowned his noble designs with so admirable success? If we look into *ver.* 8. we shall find, it was Religion that gave both the direction and point to his natural courage. *This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest obey it, to do all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have success.*

Hezekiah this way became a none-such among the Kings of *Judah*; for he clave to the Lord, and the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth, *2 Kings* 18. 5, 6, 7. And King *David* from an whole life of experiences commended this as the only method of prosperity unto *Solomon* his Son, *Keep the charge of the commandments of thy God, to walk in his ways, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turn thy self,* *1 Kings* 2. 3, 4.

How great a lustre therefore doth this Testament cast about it, that the restraint and reformation of Vice, and the due encouragement of Virtue and Piety, becomes the very Civil interest of Kings and Nations, by the joint votes and suffrages of Humane and Divine Wisdom? Let any Kingdom or State make tryal of this method, and at that very time they shall date their prosper-

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This will make them become the Terrors of their
 Enemies round about them; Peace and Prosperity
 shall flourish in the midst of them, which is the
 true Level and Design of this most necessary and
 reasonable attempt.

CHAP. II.

*Producing one Dictate or Rule of right Reason
 respecting Morality, allowed by Mankind;
 and passing current through the World with-
 out one Negative Voice, except only from
 those Men whose Reasons are utterly captiva-
 ted by their Lusts.*

SECT. I.

Such is the degeneracy and deep Corruption of
 some Mens Natures by ill Education, base
 Company, and long Custom in Sin; that aban-
 doning and casting away the bonds and restraints
 of right Reason, as well as Religion, they give
 the full scope and Liberty to their Lusts and Pas-
 sions, reckoning their chief happiness to consist in
 the Gratification and Satisfaction of their Sensitive
 Appetites. They affect a soft, delicate, sense-
 pleasing Life, reckoning it the only real Heaven
 to be desired and fought by them; and any other
 Heaven beside that, to be merely notional and
 phantastick. This is the Element they desire to
 live

live and sport in, fitly described, *Tit. 3. 3. serving divers Lusts and Pleasures.* Hence it comes to pass, that their Bodies serve only to be *strains* for Meats and Drinks, and Channels for filthy Lusts to stream through. In this stream the Masculine Agility melts away, and all public Hopes and Expectations from them are totally defeated and disappointed. Appetite is the *Master* and Reason the *Slave*.

These Men (if it be fit to call them Men) have bid defiance to their own Reason, and denounced a War against their own faculties, as if Reason had licensed and privileged (which it never can nor can do) their worse-than brutish Lusts, to the uttermost of their Abilities, without a master of restraint over them.

S E C T. II.

But notwithstanding the present Captivity of Reason under usurping and domineering Lusts, so long as it hath a permanent and fixed Root and Principle in their Nature, 'tis possible it may cover its Throne and Empire over them again, as many an imprisoned King hath done, and probably would do it in a very short space, if the prejudices they have conceived against its Government, were but once fairly confuted and removed, which certainly is not hard to do.

They are of Opinion, that the Laws of Reason are too severe, strict, and rigorous. That they much abridge them of their Pleasures and Delights, and that the Government of Sensuality be more easy, favourable and indulgent, is for Reason much more eligible and desirable.

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Whereas right Reason designs not the abandon-
 ing of all Pleasures, but only the exchange of
 them, and that exchange every way to our great
 Advantage. The only hurt or loss (if this must
 be accounted so) any Man can sustain by the ex-
 change of Pleasures made by Reason and Religi-
 on, is this, that they design for you the rational,
 ordinate, and congruous Delights, both of a Man,
 and of a Christian, in lieu of the lower, baser, and
 filthy Pleasures of a Beast, or a Devil.

They propose to you Rules about Pleasures far
 more safe and grateful, without any culpable se-
 verity or austerity in them. Reason would only
 regulate and *legitimate* your Delights, and Reli-
 gion *sanctify* them, that you might much more
 purely and sweetly enjoy them without either
shame arising from their *turpitude*, or *fear* from
 their *guilt*. The Rules of both are large and in-
 dulent enough, and keeping within their lines
 and limits, Men shall find such generous, manly,
 and agreeable delights, as are no where to be en-
 joyed without them.

S E C T. III.

To make this evident, I shall postulate and
 presume but one thing, and that a thing so im-
 mediately true and self-evident, that in the first na-
 ked proposal of it, it naturally and easily lets it
 self into every Mans understanding, and no so-
 oner asks, but gains the Approbation of right Rea-
 son. And that self-evident Principle which I take
 for granted no Man of sound intellectuals will
 quarrel or dispute, is this;

Whereas

That

That good which compriseth and involveth the Honour, Profit, and Pleasure of the whole Man, is more congruous to Humane Nature, and preferitive of it, is to be preferred in our Estimation Choice to that which only yields a lower degree of Pleasure, without Profit or Honour to the basest part of Man; and that low and transient Pleasure it doth not yield, attended and followed with many present and future Miseries, destructive to the whole Man.

The several parts of this complex Proposition cast such a Light and Glory round about the whole, that I cannot imagine, but as soon as it shall be propounded to the Judgment and Censure of sound Reason, it must immediatly gain both Approbation and Applause.

But because Reason in many Men is so much clouded, and disturbed by Lusts and Passions, that it can neither receive things orderly, nor judge of them truly and impartially: I conceive it needful to demand the Censure and Judgment of their Reason upon the Particulars comprised in this general complex Proposition, that by weighing and examining them one by one, we may try whether sound Reason hath any valuable Exception against any Part or Member thereof.

S E C T. IV.

And *First*, I take it for granted, that no Man of Reason will deny or demur to this Proposition: *That Good is to be chosen, and Evil to be avoided.* For the will is naturally carried to that which is good, as to its proper Object, and shuns that which is Evil. And that is naturally good which

is convenient, and agreeable to Nature; and that naturally Evil which is inconvenient and hurtful to Nature. So that the choice of Good rather than Evil, is the natural choice of the Will; and this choice of the Will is founded upon the Law of Self-preservation, without which the Creation would quickly disband, and no particular being could be long preserved.

And not only the Will of rational Creatures chuseth the Good, and refuseth the Evil; but every sensitive Creature is endowed with a natural Faculty to discern the one from the other in order to the preservation of their beings. You find it in the smallest and most despicable *Animals*, and therefore cannot deny it unto Man, the noblest and most excellent Being on Earth, except only in his Non-age, before he hath lived to the years of Discretion. Children indeed in their Infancy have no knowledg to discern between Good and Evil, *Deut. i. 39.* But Men not discerning Good from Evil, or chusing Evil rather than Good, are many degrees beneath Babes.

Secondly, Nor will Reason hesitate at all upon this Particular, That *there are degrees of Goodness found among Pleasures and Delights*; some are better than others. Every Life is not alike pleasant and happy. To deny this, is to make the most despicable Worm, or Fly, equally happy with the most excellent Creature upon Earth. And beside, for the Conviction of such debauched Persons, as I am here arguing with, it will follow clearly from the denial of that truth, that they really gain nothing to themselves by all their extravagant and licentious Courses, there being altogether as much Pleasure and Felicity in a temperate, chaste, and sober Life,

Life, as there is in that beastly Life they live. And their very departure from the way of Sobriety, embrace the ways of debauchery, most clearly evinceth to the World, that they do not think Pleasures equal, but that they do confidently expect to find more Pleasure and Satisfaction in the way that they chuse, than they did in the way of Sobriety, which they have left and abandoned.

Thirdly, I cannot be so uncharitable to think but the Relicks of Reason in the most profligate Person, will readily admit and grant, that *when ever the good of Pleasure, Profit, and Honour meet together, and jointly conspire to make the life of a Man more comfortable, and more durable upon Earth, this is much rather to be chosen, than a meer transitory touch of sensitive Pleasure, accompanied with present regret, and followed with the Ruin of Estate, Name, Honour, Soul, and Body.* He that thinks otherwise is more fit for a Bedlam, than a rational and sober Confutation. These things therefore I take for granted, they being innate and self-evident Notions and Principles in all Men.

S E C T. V.

The Wisdom and Goodness of God are clearly discernable in leaving such Principles of Reason and common notices of Conscience in Men after the fall, as prompt them naturally unto Justice, Chastity, Temperance, and Sobriety, and do struggle within them to restrain them from, or recover them out of their Immoralities, from which many advantages do result.

For hereby God is acknowledged all the World over, Men every where shewing by these things the work of the Law written in their hearts, *Rom.* 2. 15.

Hereby Kingdoms and Commonwealths are preserved, this being the common Bridle which restrains the outrageous Lusts of millions of Men, which else would turn the World into Confusion, tho here and there some have slipt Bridle, and run into all excess of Riot. We justly admire the Providence of God in butting, bounding, and restraining the boisterous Ocean by Mountains, Rocks and Sands; and as much is he to be admired in curbing the insatiable Lusts of Men by these innate Principles of Reason and Conscience.

Hereby the way to Sin is in some measure barr'd and shut up, and the further progress of Sinners, already entered into it, stop'd and denied. For Actions done with regret, cannot be supposed to be done so frequently and furiously, as if they were done without any regret; or that the way to Sin were smoothed to them with a full Consent and Approbation of their whole self. For most Sinners find in themselves what *Medea* did,

— *Video meliora proboque,*
Deteriora sequor —

They both see and approve that which is better, tho they follow that which is worse.

In a word, these Relicks of Reason and Conscience in Men, are fit handles to catch hold on, for the turning them about from Satan unto God. When *Paul* reasoned with *Felix* about Temperance,

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Righteousness, and Judgment to come, words laid hold upon these handles, and gave such a shake, that the Text saith, *Felix tremuit*. And oh! that this Discourse might take hold the Reason and Conscience of every profane Sinner, and produce some more excellent and lasting effect upon his Soul.

S E C T. VI.

These notices and dictates of Reason and Conscience in Men being so necessary and many ways beneficial to themselves, as well as to the whole Community; it must therefore be an horrid Villany to war against them, and by violence to oppress and enslave them to our own Lust.

This is as if a Company of desperate Rogues should assault Innocent and Noble Travellers on the lawful Road, bind and gag their Gages whilst they Rob and Prostitute them. Thus brutish Lusts, headed by the Devil, with the Suggestions of Men, travelling along the lawful Path of Duty, under the conduct of Reason and Conscience. For this Villany it was that the Apostle tells us, The wrath of God was revealed from Heaven against the *Heathens*, who held themselves in unrighteousness, *Rom. i. 18*. They had the Light of Natural Reason and Conscience in them, the inbred Notions of Good and Evil, which raised their hopes or fears according to the Nature and Quality of their Actions.

*Conscia mens ut cuique sua est, ita concipit inter
Pectora pro facto spemque metumque suo.*

But their head-strong boisterous Lusts rudely and violently brake in upon Reason and Conscience, imprisoned and bound them as *Zedekiah* did the faithful Prophet *Jeremiah* for the discharge of his Duty to him. For this the Wrath of God was revealed from Heaven against them. And indeed we cannot wonder it should be incensed against them, as it will against all that act like them. For into such a Sin as this, many direful Aggravations fall in together to make it a monstrous and prodigious Sin.

Here we find an high and causeless Abuse of the noblest natural Faculties and Powers of a Mans own Soul. What harm have thy Reason and Conscience done thee by stimulating and perswading to Temperance, Chastity, and Sobriety, or by struggling and striving with thee to prevent both thy present and future Ruin? Do they lay their faithful and loving Hands of restraint upon thee, when they see thee running headlong into Destruction? And do they deserve for this, and no worse than this, to be thus trampled under foot and abused? Ask thy self, Man, whether thou thinkest thy very Dog deserves to be hanged for opening at midnight, and taking that thief by the throat who came to cut thine? And darest thou use those noble Powers within thee, worse than thou wouldst use a Dog? Humanity would blush at such an Action.

These vile Abuses of thy Reason and Conscience carry also in them an horrid contempt of God, whose Patent, Officers, and Delegates thy Reason and Conscience are. Those certainly Sin with an high hand against the Lord, who make nothing to controul, kick, and lay in Irons his Commission-Officers, appointed for no other end, by their present and future Felicity. Nay,

Such Men as these are found in a plain Confessory with the Devil, and that in a most unnatural and horrid Plot against their own Souls and Bodies. Their Light and their Lusts are struggling together. Sin and Conscience are combating one with the other; the one to destroy, the other to save Man. Darest thou joyn with thy Lusts against light, and think not to be brought in as a Party, confederate with the Devil? The stopping of the Mouth of thy Conscience, fully proves both Consent and Concealment. And if proved Consent and Concealment make thee not a Party Accessary, it will be very strange.

Plutarch in his Book *de Amicitia*, relates a Story of a *Persian*, who scuffling in the dark with a *Magician*, against whom he had a grudge, and not being able to conquer him himself, called upon his Friend, who stood by with a naked Sword ready to strike, but durst not for fear of killing his Friend. The *Persian* crys out, *Strike, strike, however thou shouldst strike; thrust at an adventure; I care not so long as thou kill the Magician, tho thou kill him through my Body.*

Much so stands the case here with a little variation. Thou art furiously set upon the Engagement of thy Lusts, nothing will quiet thee of their Satisfaction. Thy Reason and Conscience will oppose it, and struggle hard with thee to withhold thee from them. But thou carest not in the rage of thine insatiable Appetite, tho thy Reason and Conscience both fall in the Combate, rather than thy Lusts should not be satisfied. Oh, what Bruits! yea, what Monsters can Sin turn Men into!

S E C T. VII.

If Men have not quite extinguished both Reason and Conscience by debauchery, and divested themselves of Humanity, one would think no Motion or Address can possibly be made to them more fair, rational, and inoffensive than this, that they would be pleased but to consult themselves, and hearken to the native and unconstrained Voice of their own Reason and Conscience, before they engage themselves in matters of great Concernment, upon which both their present and eternal welfare do depend; or if they are already engaged, yet at least to lend an ear to what they have to offer for their recovery, before it be too late.

You are not here urged and pressed to hearken to the Voices of your Enemies that hate you, or to the counsel and advice of meer Strangers who know not your Affairs; but to hearken to your selves, to be your own Arbitrators and Judges, to draw up the Award with your own hand. 'Tis strange and an hard case indeed, and scarce to be supposed, that Men should fall out with themselves in the End such a rate, that they had rather hear the Voice of their mortal Enemy the Devil, and listen to his advice and Counsel, than to the Voice of their own Reason and Conscience.

We all account it madness in *Balaam* to beat his innocent Ass, and threaten to kill her for running the Sword of the Angel that opposed his Oh, passage in a sinful and dangerous Expedition. But now many use both their Reason and Conscience worse than Asses, because they dare not go forward, and desperately carry them into the very

midst of Dangers and Miseries, which they plainly foresee and warn them of?

What Injuries have thy Reason or Conscience done thee, Man? What Affronts have they given thee? That thou wilt not suffer them to speak or offer one word, tho never so pertinent, seasonable and necessary? There is a Civility due from us to meer Strangers, yea, to Strangers of an inferior Rank and Quality. The least we can do, is to give them a patient hearing, and not interrupt them whilst they speak nothing but what is rational, pertinent, and necessary, especially if it be to their own good and advantage. 'Tis strange Men should not think themselves as much obliged to pay Civility and Respect to their own Reasons and Consciences, as they daily pay to meer Strangers and Inferiors. Give them but a patient hearing, and they will both tell thee :

We are thine appointed Guardians, and have our Commission from God to advise, direct, and counsel thee. We are thy faithful and inward Friends; yea, we are thine own self, and the best and noblest part of thy self too. At our hands God will require thy Blood, shouldst thou perish by our Silence or Treachery. We cannot be both Silent and Innocent, are both in such hazards. Don't abuse us, and stop our Mouths for crying out Stop, Stop, when we see thee departing from the Paths of Honesty, Honour, and Safety, and taking the direct Road to that Gulph of Misery, in which few, if any foot-steps are found of such as return again, that are far engaged therein.

Suffer us but fairly and friendly to expostulate the matter with thee. What design can we have against thy true Interest, whilst thine and ours cannot possibly be opposite or disjunct, but one and the same Interest.

Well

Well then, that which thy Reason and Conscience offers being so weighty, fair, and just, and what thine own Interest plainly lies in, I will not be so uncharitable, as to suppose thou wilt either refuse to hear, or reject what they have to say in the following Cases and Debates.

CHAP. III.

Wherein the true Censure and Judgment of right Reason and Conscience, are given upon profane Swearing and Blaspheming the Name of God: As also their Replies to several Pleas offered in Defence or Excuse thereof.

SECT. I.

GOD bestowed on Man the Noble Faculty of Speech (a peculiar Favour and Priviledg) for two Ends and Uses. (1.) That by the use of his Tongue he may glorify his Maker, and sound forth the Praises of his Redeemer. (2.) That we might thereby be able to communicate our minds one to another in all our necessary and convenient Interests and Concernments, whether Civil or Religious. This Member, the Tongue, tho small in quantity, is found to be mighty in efficacy; and whilst it is kept under the Rule and Government of Grace, the words that drop from

it are as Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver. Gracious words are Bread to feed, and Water to refresh the Souls of others. A sanctified Tongue is as a Tree of Life. Conversion, Edification, and Consolation, are the delicious Fruits of the Lips.

But the Tongues of some Men break loose from under all the Laws and Rules both of Reason and Religion, and serve only to vent the froth and filth which abounds in the heart, as in a Fountain of Pollution. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The Tongue moves lightly, but falls heavily; it strikes soft, but wounds deep. It would not spare Men of the highest Rank and Eminence, did not the fear of capital Punishments teach them so much Wit to keep their Tongues in Prison, that they may keep their Bodies out of Prison. And tho for this reason they are afraid of making too bold with the Names of Men; yet having no fear of God at all, they fall upon his great and dreadful Name, tossing it to and fro without any Respect or Reverence.

Augustus prohibited the common use of his Name, lest it should grow too cheap and vile, by the common and needless using of it. The Name of *Mercurius Trismegistus* was very sparingly used, because of the great Reverence the People had for him. The very *Heathens* were afraid to pronounce the Name of their great god, *Demogorgon*, as fearing the Earth would tremble when his Name was mentioned. How doth the Reverence of *Heathens* to their false gods expose and aggravate the impudence of professed Christians in their vile Indignities and Abuses of the Great and Terrible Name of

of the True God! Yea, they not only take up his Name vainly and rashly into their Lips, but audaciously insert it by a profane Oath into their common Talk, as that which gives the Grace, Lepor, and Ornament to their Discourses. Some have not been ashamed to say, What pity is it that Swearing should be a Sin, which gives so great a Grace and Ornament to Language?

S E C T. II.

Swearing by the Name of God in a righteous Cause, when called thereto by due Authority, is not only a lawful, but a religious Act, founded upon, and directed to the Honour of God's Omniscience, whereunto there is a solemn Appeal made in every assertory and promissory Oath, and a religious Acknowledgment made him of his infallible Knowledge of the Truth or Falshood of our Hearts, and all the Secrets of them, be they never so involved and inward things.

The lawful use and end of Swearing, is to put an end to all Strife, and to maintain both Equity and Charity among Men, the two Bonds and Ligaments of Humane Society. Now it being the Sovereign Right and Property of God alone, infallibly to search and try the hearts and reins of Men, he thereby becomes the infallible Witness to the Truth or Falshood of what they speak; so that in every such lawful Oath, there is not only a solemn Appeal, and in that Appeal an Ascription of Glory to his Sovereign Omniscience; but therein (implicately at least) they put themselves under his Wrath and Curse, in case they

Swear falsely, which makes this Action most sacred and solemn.

The deep Corruption of Humane Nature by the fall, makes these Appeals to God under a Curse necessary. For it is supposed, tho Men be false and deceitful, yet there is some Reverence of a Deity, and fear of his Wrath and Curse, left unextinguished in their fallen Nature. So that Men will rather speak the truth, (tho to their own shame and loss) than by invoking so glorious a Name in vain, put both Soul and Body under his Wrath and Curse. By which it appears what an awful and solemn thing an Oath is; and that every good Man not only takes a lawful Oath with holy fear and trembling, because of the Solemnity of the Action; but rather ought to chuse Death, than to Swear prophanely, because of the horrid Malignity of the Action.

S E C T. III.

The contumely and malignity found in profane Oaths, appears in that terrible threatning, *The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain*; a threatning altogether as Just and Righteous, as it is Severe and Terrible. This Sign admits of degrees of Guilt. 'Tis highly sinful to Swear by the Name of God lightly and vainly in our common Discourses, tho the Oath be clip'd, and half suppress'd, or disguised in the Pronunciation of it, which argues some remains of fear and shame in the Sinner.

'Tis yet worse (and indeed not a jot below Blasphemy) to swear by any other Name, than the Name of God. For in so doing, they attribute

bute to a Creature the Sovereign and Incommunicable property of God, set that Creature in the very Throne of God, and Invest it with the Regalities of his Omniscience, to know our Hearts, and Almighty Power to avenge the wrong upon us done to himself, as well as to Men by false swearing.

But to break in rudely and blasphemously upon the Sacred and Tremendous Name of God, with bold and full-mouth'd Oaths, striking through his Sacred Name, with direct contumelious Blasphemies; this argues an heart from which all fear of God is utterly expelled and banished.

Yet some there are grown up to that prodigious height of Impiety, that they dare assault the very Heavens, and discharge whole Volumes of Blasphemies against that Glorious Majesty which dwells there. They are not afraid to bid defiance to him, and challenge the God that made them, to do his worst. They deck and adorn (as they account it) their common Discourses with bloody Oaths, and horrid Imprecations, not reckoning them Genteel and Modish without them. It consists not with the greatness of their Spirits to be wicked at the common rate. They are willing to let the World know, that they are none of those puny, silly Fellows, that are afraid of invisible Powers, or so much Cowards as to clip a full-mouth'd Oath, by suppressing, or whispering the Emphatical sounding Syllable; but think an horrid Blasphemy makes the most sweet and graceful Cadency in their Hellish Rhetorick.

They

They glory that they have fully conquered all those troublesome Notions of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, Heaven and Hell, to that degree, that they can now Affront the Divine Majesty to his very Face, and not fear the worst he threatens in his Word against their wickedness.

If there be a God (which they scarce believe) they are resolved audaciously to provoke him to give them a convincing Evidence of his Being. And if he be (as they are told he is) rich in Patience and Forbearance, they are resolved to try how far his Patience will extend, and what load of wickedness it is capable to bear.

If their Damnation be not yet sure enough, they will do their utmost to make it sure, by breaking down the only Bridg whereby they can escape Damnation; I mean, by trampling under their feet the precious Blood and Wounds of the Son of God, and imprecating the Damnation of Hell upon their own Souls, as if it slumbred too long, and were too slow-pac'd in its motions towards them. I am of Opinion, there are few Christians to be found on Earth, crying so often, *Lord, pardon, Lord, save me*, as some Wretches among us cry, (*Horresco referens!*) *God damn me, the Devil take me.*

Herein they seem to envy the happiness of the Devils, and damned Wretches in Hell, and endeavour (as one speaks) to snatch Damnation out of Gods hands before the time, as if they could not be soon enough among their roaring and howling Companions in the midst of the everlasting burnings. But, why such haste to be perfectly miserable? The very Devils themselves deprecate Torments before their time, tho you imprecate

imprecate them. Your misery makes haste enough towards you; you need not quicken it, or thus run to meet it.

I am perswaded, that if the Bars of the Bottomless Pit were broken up, and Devils should ascend in Humane Shapes, none among them would be found hastning upon themselves the fulness and compleatness of their Misery as you do. 'Tis a Truth, though a strange one, That it is much easier to find, than imagine men upon Earth professing *Christian Religion*, yet in some respect sunk below the wickedness of the *Diabolical* nature, by making Damnation both the Subject of their Drollery, and the object of their very wishes and desires. Some greater Masters of our Language, may more lively and emphatically express the horrid nature of this Sin; but excuse me, Reader, if I believe no Words or Thoughts can measure the height or depth of this monstrous Abomination.

S E C T. IV.

Such contumelious Language as this (especially when grown modish and common) cannot but be a most high and dreadful provocation of God, and such an one as will certainly bring down his desolating vengeance, not only upon the heads of blasphemers themselves, but upon the States and Kingdoms that connive at, or tolerate them. We read *Zech. 5. 2, 3, 4.* of a flying Roll-full of Curses, the length thereof twenty Cubits, and the breadth thereof ten Cubits, which shall enter into the house of the Swearer, remain in the midst of his House, and consume it with the Timber and Stones

Stones thereof. Blasphemy and prophane swearing are like Barrels of Gunpowder laid under the Foundation of many great and noble Families, many of which are already blown up, and laid in ruins by this Sin, and many more ready to follow, as soon as the Justice of God shall give fire to it.

And (comparatively speaking) it were happy if the mischief ended here; but alas! it causes God to commence a quarrel with the whole Land, *Hos. 4. 2, 3. And because of Oaths the Land mourneth.* You find in *Isa. 38.* what it was that brought that unparallel'd desolation upon that famous and flourishing City *Jerusalem*, and the whole Land of *Judah*: *For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, because their tongues and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.*

But alas! Scripture-threatnings signifie scarce so much with these men, as the Predictions of the Weather in an *Almanack*; and which is strange to consider, the very execution of Scripture-threatnings before their eyes, will not terrifie them from this inhumane wickedness: Even these also are laughed to scorn, or easily forgotten.

Oh! that God would set it home with power upon the Spirits of all that are in Power, to take some speedy and effectual course to remove this accursed thing, this iniquity to be punished by the Judge; one (and a chief one too) of those direful provocations of Heaven, to which we owe a special part of our National infelicity at this day. We all acknowledge, that all prosperity and success depends upon God: If so, Reason will subsume, that it must be therefore the interest of Kingdoms and

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and Commonwealths to prevent and restrain those impieties, which so audaciously provoke and incense his wrath. As much is this their duty and interest, as it is the interest of a *Courtier* to avoid offences of his Royal Master, the King, upon whose Favour, his Honour and Preferment depends. Or as it is the duty of the *Owner*, to keep in that Ox which is used to goring; or cover that pit into which some have, and others of his Family are like to fall; Or carefully and speedily to remove that Gunpowder which his enemies have placed under the foundation of his house to blow it up. Both Reason and Experience will inform the Rulers of this World, That professed Rebels to the God of Heaven, are never like to make useful Subjects in the Kingdoms of men.

S E C T, V.

Till publick Justice lay hold upon such Offenders, let us try what close reasoning may effect for their Reformation. 'Tis hard to imagine, that men of Sense should so generally and so far engage themselves in this Course of prophane swearing, and have nothing at all to say for themselves.

If they have no reason at all to offer in justification, or excuse of what they do, they are the bruits, not the men, and are self-condemned already.

'Tis a question with me, whether the Soul of man on this side Hell can sink so far into the nature of a Devil, as to sin because he will sin, or to engage himself in a Course of Sin, without any respect at all to some carnal interest, either of Profit, Pleasure or Honour.

The

The *Thief* hath a visible Temptation of Gain to allure him, or pinching Necessity to induce him. The *Liar* is drawn in to commit that second Sin, to cover the shame and turpitude of a former. The *Adulterer* promiseth himself Pleasure in the satisfaction of his Lusts. And though men generally stand amazed to think what that Temptation should be which prevails upon the Swearer, yet doubtless something there is he hath to plead in excuse and extenuation of his Fault. Whatsoever it be, let it be produced and weighed in the ballance of right Reason; *valeat quantum valere potest*, let it have its due value and consideration. And could I imagine any thing more likely to be their inducements, than what I shall here mention, I would not conceal them. There are only four things that can fall within the compass of my imagination pleadable by them, when seriously charged with the evil of the Fact.

1. Some of them will haply tell us, that they would not swear as they do, if they could gain credit to what they say without it; but the incredulity of others provokes them to add so many Oaths to their single Affirmations.

2. Others of them will tell us, they only swear in their passion, when provoked by injuries received from others; and if men did not wrong them, they would not wrong God as they do.

3. Some will plead, that Swearing is become modish, the Badge and Character of a Gentleman, that it gives them reputation among men of their own rank and quality, and that they shall be looked upon as sneaking fools, unfit for the Company of Gentlemen, if they could not discourse with them in this Dialect.

4. And

4. And some will confess the Practice is evil, but that they have gotten such an ill habit, and the Sin is become so customary with them, that many times they know not whether they swear or no.

I cannot imagine, nor (I think) they themselves, what else is pleadable in excuse or extenuation of this horrid Sin: Let these that are produced have a fair tryal at the bar of Reason, and carry your selves towards this Sin for ever hereafter, according to that righteous verdict your selves shall now be forced to pass upon it.

S E C T. VI.

To begin with the first Plea; You say, you would not swear as you do, could you gain credit to your words without it. Weigh this question in the upright balance of thine own Reason, whether any wise or sober man in the world, will find himself ever the more obliged to believe what you say, by the addition of blasphemous Oaths and Imprecations, to your plain and simple Affirmations and Negations. I cannot think that you your selves would give the more credit to any man that shall profess his sincerity to you, by finding him in that his very Profession false and treacherous to his God. Say, Reason, dost not thou take this for a sure truth, That he who makes no conscience of being true to God, will never make much conscience of being false to men? For what is that which gives any man's words reputation among wise and sober men, but the supposition of his integrity and consciencious fear of his deceit and

and guile? Take away that, and with it you take away the credibility of all his Reports and Affirmations.

If I look upon the person that speaks, as a man of integrity and conscientious tenderneſs, I have a ſufficient ordinary ſecurity of the truth of what he ſaith. But if I look upon him as a man of a prostitute and ſeared Conſcience, that dares venture upon any ſin; a man in whom there is no awe of God to produce veracity in his words; then my Reason preſently concludes, that where there is no *Truth*, there ought to be no *Truſt*: For *Truth* is the very ground-work and foundation of *Truſt*. Now what truth can we ſuppoſe to be left in that man, that ſticks not upon any trivial occaſion to break aſunder all the obligations of a Creature to his Creator; together with all the bonds of kindneſs his great and beſt Benefactor hath bound him withall, and without any the leaſt Injury he can pretend his God hath done him, to fly in his very face with the moſt contumelious Language? Can we ſuppoſe any truth to be in; or any truſt to be due to ſuch a man as this?

Good men and bad are thus contradiſtinguiſhed, *Eccl. 9. 2. Him that ſweareth, and he that feareth an oath.* A conſcientious man is ſo afraid of an Oath, that he would rather chuſe to die than ſwear ſome kind of Oaths: And though he be ſatiſfied of the lawfulneſs of an Oath in general, and of the matter of that Oath he ſweareth in particular; yet an holy awe and fear of God fills his heart, when he ſwears lawfully and neceſſarily, leſt he ſhould fail in the manner of it, by not giving that due reverence to the Name of God,

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which so sacred and solemn an Action requires.

But from prophane swearing and blaspheming the Name of God, every mans Reason may justly and plainly infer this Conclusion ; That the fear of God is not in that man's heart : And where there is no fear of God, what truth can be supposed in him, or what trust can be due to his Words or Oaths ? but the more he swears, still the less reason all wise men have to believe him. And I am sure the credulity of Fools adds little reputation to him. This Plea therefore for prophane Swearing, is altogether sham'd, baffled and cashiered by the common Reason of Mankind.

S E C T. VII.

Call therefore to the Bar of Reason, the second Plea or Apology for prophane Swearing.

You say, you swear not, unless provoked by injuries men have done you.

This is so weak a Plea for so great a Sin, that I wonder men are not ashamed to bring it into the Court of Reason. This is the true sense and strength of it : My enemy hath abused me, therefore I'll avenge the wrong my enemy hath done me, upon my best Friend and Benefactor. I challenge you to give but the colour or the shadow of a sound Reason, why upon any abuse you have received from men, you should fall so injuriously upon the Name of God, who never abused or injured you, since he gave you a Being, but hath always done you good. Tell me, Man, (if thou have

have the Reason of a man in thee) what wrong hath God done thee? Wherein hath he injured thee, that thou thus wrakest thy revenge upon him? If an enemy have affronted you, Reason would tell you, you ought not to take revenge for it, upon your Friend and best Benefactor. Have you none but God to abuse, when men abuse and injure you? Can your Reason comprove and allow such an Action as this? Satan instigates the corruptions of men to injure you, and you fly in the face of God for it, whose Laws severely prohibit such Actions, and will avenge the injuries done unto him. Speak no more therefore for ever in the way of excusing the horrid sinfulness of this fact against God, upon the account of injuries done thee by thy Fellow-Creature. The Case is plainly determined, and cast over the bar of Reason with contempt and abhorrence.

S E C T. VIII.

Come we next to your third Excuse or Plea; That *Swearing is become modish, and gives you a Reputation among men of your own Rank and Quality, and that you shall be looked upon as sneaking fellows, unfit for the Society of Gentlemen, if you did not discourse with them in their own Dialect.*

This Apology for Sin is of no late date: *Salvian* mentions it as far back as his own Time; prophane persons then * thus pleaded for themselves, That they were compelled to be evil, lest they should be accounted vile.

* *Mali esse coguntur, ne viles habeantur.*

Whether

Whether there be any weight in this Apology for Swearing, will quickly appear, now it is to be laid in the ballance of true Reason.

1. And first of all, let us consider what makes a true Gentleman, and whether prophane Swearing have any place in his true Character and Description. A Gentleman is one that springs from famous and renowned Ancestors, and degenerates not from their Probity and Honour. †

† *Generosus, nobilis, ex præclaro genere ortus, qui à genere non defecit.*

This is the man whom the Latins call *Generosus*, and we a *Gentleman*. Because we suppose a man of such an Extraction and Education more *Gentle*, affable, and condescending to Inferiors, and to keep a stricter government over his Tongue and Passions, than rude Plebeians are wont to do. Upon this account the Poet rightly observes;

*Quo major est quisquis, magis est placabilis ira,
Et Faciles motus mens generosa capit.*

Men of *Gentle* Extraction and Education, are Persons whose Passions are supposed to move more gently than other mens: And if at any time they be moved disorderly, yet are they more placable, and sooner reduced, than those of sordid and baser Spirits are.

'Tis Virtue which raises and ennobles Families at first: for *omnis sanguis consolor*, all Humane Blood is derived from, and equally tainted by *Adam*. Nobler and Baser Blood is an after Difference, made by Virtue and Vice among men. And as Virtue first ennobled and raised some Families

milies above others, so it will still continue the Line of Honour in their Posterity: And as their Vertues shall encrease, so will their Honour proportionably do.

The Case truly and plainly standing thus, 'tis morally impossible to make Debauchery the proper Badge and Character of Gentility. For men of Eminency above the Vulgar, are more obliged than they to shun all base and sordid Actions: And as their Honour increaseth, so do the obligations to Temperance and Sobriety encrease and strengthen upon them proportionably.

'Twas therefore a right and rational Observation of Hierome, *I see nothing desirable in Nobility (saith he) but this, that such men are bound by a certain kind of necessity, not to degenerate from, or stain the glory and honour of their renowned Ancestors.* And the Reason is strong and evident. For Vertue being that which first differenced their Blood from others, they are obliged by all the value they have for the honour of their Blood and Families, to shun those Vices which stain that honour and dignity. And what Vice can dishonour and debase them more, than prophane Swearing. For if the Arms of many Noble Families have been reversed for Treason against the King; 'tis irrational to imagine, that Treason against the King of Kings, should add a new mark of honour: And what is Blasphemy but Treason against God? 'Tis plain then from the true Rule and Character of a Gentleman, prophane Swearing neither first raised, nor can preserve and continue, but rather blots and exposes their Reputation and Honour.

2. Though I am most willing to pay a becoming deference to all Persons of Noble and Genteel Extraction, yet in faithfulness to their true honour, I am here obliged to say, (and in saying it, I can offend no man that hath a true sense of honour) that their natural Descent can never give them so much honour, as the Vices I am here censuring will reflect ignominy and dishonour upon them. To be a slave of Satan, and your own lusts, is such a mark of infamy, as all the honourable and illustrious Titles in the world can never cover. It is better to rise by Vertue to Honour, from contemptible Parents, than by Vice and prophane-ness to grow contemptible from honourable Parents. 'Tis your honour to have many Servants at your command, obsequiously attending a nod of your head, or a beck of your finger: but ask your own Reason, Gentlemen, whether it be not a greater dishonour for you to attend as obsequiously your selves upon every beck and nod of Satan, and your own lusts.

Were your *Natural Birth* once ennobled by the *New-Birth*, you would be more than thrice honourable: Grace would make you more illustrious, than your natural Extraction doth or can do. Or if Morality (which is far inferior to that honour, and for which, *Heathens* themselves have been renowned in the *Pagan* world) did but adorn and beautifie your Conversations, though it cannot entitle you to Heaven, or secure to you the glory of the world to come, yet it would make you shine in the eyes of men in this World, and taking its advantage from your honourable Extraction, make you differ from persons of an inferior rank, as Stars of a greater magnitude and lustre.

I hope

I hope, Gentlemen valuing themselves upon the honour, will not be offended at a sharper invective than this, against those Vices that darken and eclipse their honour, both in the eyes of God, as well as in the judgment of all wise and good men.

3. Suppose what you say to be true, that some profane Gentlemen should scoff and deride you for your sober Carriage, and decorous Language (things which ought to be inseparable from true Gentility) I would in this case appeal to your own Reason, why you should not enjoy your own pleasure in as full latitude and liberty, as they do theirs? They delight in the Dialect of Devils, you in pure and inoffensive Language. If they will drink the puddled Waters, and you refuse them for the pure Cristal Streams, you have as much reason (and a thousand times more) to assert your liberty to be vertuous, than they have (or can pretend to have) a privilege to be vicious.

And if they will be offended with you for this their offence is groundless in themselves, and will be greatly advantageous to you. For you need not doubt but you may find better Company than theirs any where on this side Hell. I remember that rational and excellent Apology, which *Tertullian* made for the Christians in his time against the *Gentiles*: "Wherein (saith he) do we offend you, "if we will not partake with you in your Delights? If we sustain any damage by such our refusal, the injury can be only our own. We reject your Pleasures, and you are not delighted with ours.

You

You will shew your selves true and worthy Gentlemen in abandoning and rejecting (upon so noble an account as this) all further unnecessary Society with such *Gentil-men*; for so they deserve to be called, rather than *Gentlemen*. They boast indeed the honour of their Blood, whilst they trample the precious and invaluable Blood of Christ under their feet: They boast their Eminency above the Vulgar, whilst mean time they labour vilely to debase him that set them there.

I am sure there's not a Devil in Hell, but is by nature of a more honourable and illustrious House, than the proudest of Blasphemers. They are Angels by Nature, though Devils by Practice. They have little reason to boast of their Original Excellency, which now aggravates their misery: Sin darkened their lustre, degraded them from their Natural Dignity; and so it will do theirs also, that imitate Devils in their Blasphemy and Malignity against God.

4. It may as easily be proved as asserted, That to make Cursing, Swearing and Blaspheming, the Badges and Characteristical marks of a true Gentleman, is the foulest blot and mark of infamy, which the malice of their Enemies can devise to put into their *Escutcheons*; and such an affront, as ought to be highly resented by all true *Gentlemen*.

Should the most malicious Enemy you have in the world, see an *Herald* to devise a mark of Infamy for your *Coats of Arms*, to make you ridiculous and a by-word among the people, he could never dishonour you at that rate you this way dishonour your selves.

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For if Debauchery be both asserted and allowed to be the true Badge of Gentility, then your own Reason will infer, that all the Ancient *Epithets* of Gentility ought thereupon to be altered. And would those *Gentlemen*, think you, take it well, to have the *Titles* and *Epithets* of *Ingenuous*, *Worthy*, *Honourable*, and *Noble*, changed into *Cursing*, *Swearing*, *Damning*, *Blaspheming Gentlemen*? You cannot but see the inconsistency of both; If therefore you will adopt and wear the latter, you must either cashier and renounce the former, or try to make the former consistent with the latter, which I presume the most ingenious among you will find a hard task to do.

5. I humbly beg leave to propound one plain blunt Question to you, Gentlemen. The matter of it is too rational to be rejected, and let that make atonement for the blunt manner of its proposal. And the Question is this.

Qu. Whether your Reason and Conscience be fully satisfied, that when you die (as you know you shortly must) you shall then appear before the Judgment-seat of God, in the quality and character of Gentlemen? Do you verily think you shall find the more favour there, for the sake of your Noble Descent, and Honourable Extraction, or that your Gentility shall make an atonement for all your impiety?

I am perswaded, Gentlemen, you do not, you cannot think so. You know you must appear before that God, with whom there is no respect of persons: a God that will certainly damn the impenitent Blasphemer. The man must assuredly

redly go to Hell, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. and if the *man* be damned, certainly the *Gentleman* is in a bad Case.

6. In a word, I am past all doubt, and so may you too, that this genteel mode of Swearing, Drinking and Whoreing, which hath spread so far in the present infamous Age, into Protestant States and Kingdoms, is the very Spirit and strength of a *Popish* Plot, Subtilly projected, and industriously managed for their effectual reduction to *Poper*y.

For nothing in the world can reconcile men to *Poper*y, yea, and even endear them to it, like Debauchery. Under *Poper*y, *Gentlemen* may come up to the rates of costly Pardons and Indulgences, for their greatest Sins. They may give themselves liberty to wallow in prophaneness all the days of their life. They may give their lusts the utmost scope and liberty, and yet have a plenary Pardon when they die. So that they need not abridge themselves of any sinful liberty, or boggle at the loudest Blasphemy, whilst they have that in their Pocket to still and quiet something that grumbles in their Bosom. Do you not see, *Gentlemen*, the natural tendencies of these things? Does not Debauchery look like a Shooing-Horn to *Poper*y.

Besides, *Gentlemen*, the Devil and the Pope are confederates in a farther design upon you; and if their design hit, they hope to win by Power what they may miss by Policy; and that by the very same method of corrupting and debauching Persons of eminent Rank and Quality, in Protestant Kingdoms and Commonwealths, For (as a

* *Lauren. Humphredus de*
Nobilitate. p. 64.

* Learned man in Queen
Elizabeths Days rightly

Qui publicis rebus inter-
sunt & præsunt, nisi viri
summi ac nobiles? Quis in
Senatu præsit, in foro præ-
sidet? principes sanè viri &
nobiles. Quis jubet, vetat,
agat, satagit? Quis versat
& voluit omnia? Quis le-
ges fingit & refingit? Quis
in pace Rempublicam, con-
tra hostes bella administrat,
præterquam viri nobiles?
&c.

observed); These are
 the men especially in-
 terested in the publick
 Affairs of Kingdoms
 These represent the
 People in Parliaments
 These make their Laws,
 administer the Govern-
 ment in Peace and War.
 To their hands are com-
 mitted the great con-
 cerns of Nations. These
 are they that fill the Seats
 of publick Judicature.

If Gentlemen therefore by this means be gene-
 rally corrupted and infected by Debauchery, their
 influence and example is likely to infect the
 greatest part of the Body-Politic, and either
 make the people easily pliable to the charms and
 courtships of Popery, for the Reason before
 mentioned, or so besot their excellent Parts, and
 enervate their Masculine Courage, that they shall
 fall an easie prey to their (otherwise) weak and
 despicable Enemies.

And certainly, Gentlemen, we have all cause
 to reckon this Plot very far advanced, when we
 shall see Debauchery every where made the Badge
 of Gentility; and Chastity, Temperance and So-
 briety, become the marks and notes of Infamy.
 When Civility it self shall be hiss'd with derision
 out of some Gentlemens Company; and the more
 temperate and sober any man is, by so much the
 less fit to be a Gentleman's Companion.

By

By this time I hope you are convinced, that true Gentility is no enemy to Sobriety, nor Debauchery the Character of Gentility; and will at least pardon, if not thank me, for endeavouring this way to secure the true honour of some, whilst I rationally argue down the Vices and Follies of others. This Plea for Debauchery, you see hath the same fate the former had, and deserves never to be mentioned more.

S E C T. IX.

There is but one Plea more, and that as silly and irrational as any of the former; And that is,

The custom and habit of Swearing, which you say is hard to be broken. This Sin is become so customary to you, that now you scarce note or observe it in your selves.

That there may be Truth in the Matter of this Plea, I neither deny nor doubt; but that it is a rational and allowable Plea, will never be granted by your own Reason. The thing you say may be true; for we sometimes find that when you are taxed for Swearing, you will presently swear that you did not swear; and curse him to his face, that accuses you for Cursing.

But pray, Gentlemen, make your own Reason judge, whether Custom be a valid and allowed Plea for prophane Swearing and Cursing. Say, Reason, wilt thou allow that one of the highest aggravations of Sin, is pleadable in thy Court

for the excuse or extenuation of it? Wilt thou give it under thy hand, that the man is the less guilty, because the more wicked? Darest thou warrant it, that God will take the less notice of the wrongs men do him, because they are used and accustomed so to wrong and abuse him every hour in the day? If your Reason can allow and warrant this, I must say it is different, yea, and opposite to the common Reason of Mankind.

Say not, I make my own Reason the Rule and Standard of yours or other mens. For I argue here (as I have done all along before) upon the common *Topicks* and *Maxims* of Reason, generally allowed all the World over by Mankind. If a Practice be evil, the oftner it is repeated, the more still it is aggravated.

To be plain and faithful with you, Gentlemen, if it be your custom to blaspheme, 'tis God's custom to damn Blasphemers. If you use to be drunk and unclean, God uses to punish Drunkards and Adulterers (if impenitent and unreformed) with his everlasting wrath.

And when you are cited (as shortly you must be) before the awful Tribunal of the great, the just, and the terrible God, ask but your selves, whether such a Plea as this, be like to excuse you in whole or in part, and take off the heinousness of these horrid Impieties? Will your prophane Oaths, and direful Execrations and Imprecations, be excused in the least degree, by telling him, Lord, I was so accustomed to blaspheme thy Name, Cursing, Swearing and Damning were so familiar Language in my Lips from day to day, that I had quite lost the sense of the Action, as well as of the

Wilt thou the evil thereof; and therefore, Lord, pity, spare
s the less and have mercy on me: O damn not my soul to
st thou to thine everlasting wrath. For though I have im-
notice of precatcd it upon my self, yet frequent custom at
are used length extinguished all my sense and conscience of
im every the evil thereof, till at length I could play with
flow and a direful imprecation as an harmless thing; nay,
yea, and thought it an ornament and grace to my Speech,
of Man a gallant Expression alamode the Times and Pla-
ces I lived in.

Rule and Is not this as good a Plea, and not a jot better
I argue than that of a Malefactor upon his Tryal for Life
upon the and Death, when Theft or Robbery have been
generally evidently and substantially proved upon him, and
d. If the Judge demandeth what he hath to say for him-
he more self, why Sentence of Death should not pass
upon him? Mercy, my Lord, Mercy, cries he;
Gentlemen, for I have been so used and accustomed to filching
od's cu- and thieving from my Youth up, that for some
e to be years before I was apprehended, every ones Goods
Drunk- and Cattel seemed to me to look like my own;
nrefor- so that I scarce knew when I stole, and when I
did not.

And thus, Gentlemen, you have heard a fair
u must Tryal of the Sin of prophane Swearing and Im-
at, the precatcds of Damnation, and you have heard
selves, the verdict of your own Reason and Conscience
se you upon the Case. The Lord help you to break off
business and reform that sin, for which there is not one
ophane word of Apology or excuse now left in your
ations, Mouths.
g him,

Name, Let me close all I have to say upon this head
miliar with one plain Question: Do you think you must
I had die, or live here for ever, as you now do? If you
as of are convinced (as all the Living are supposed to
the be)

be) that you must die, do you desire an easie and comfortable, or a painful and terrible Death? I presume there is no man living that is convinced he must die, but desires naturally and rationally an *Ἀσπασίαν*, as easy and comfortable a dissolution as may be. If so, I appeal to your Reason, whether prophane swearing and blaspheming the Name of God, be a proper rational way to obtain peace and comfort at death? With what hope or encouragement can those tongues of yours cry at death, Lord have mercy upon me, which have prophaned that Name, and imprecated Damnation from him, till you came into your last extremities, which convinced you, you could live no longer.

'Tis a serious Question, and well worth a cool and solemn debate in your own Reasons and Consciences. Some of you are more immediately exposed to the dangers of death than others, ready to be disbanded by a *Bullet*. If you fall, you must either fall considerately, or inconsiderately. If inconsiderately, and without any sense or conscience of this horrid guilt, you die impenitently, and consequently desperately and miserably. If considerately, and with awakened Consciences, I demand, Whether such guilt as this will not roar louder than the Peals and Volleys of those great and small Guns do, which breathe Destruction upon you, and round about you? I have done my Message plainly and faithfully to the very face of your Reason and Conscience; and if for my faithfulness and zeal both for God's honour and yours, I am rewarded with your Curses; yet if you would forbear to blaspheme and rend in pieces the Name of God, I shall not much regard the obloquy

obloquy and reproach my Name shall undergo and suffer upon that account. But I expect from you better fruit than this.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein Reason and Conscience are again consulted about the Practice of Drunkenness; and their righteous and impartial Censure given upon that Case.

SECT. I.

THough our Souls and Bodies be of vastly different Natures and Originals, yet they do clasp and embrace each other with most dear and tender affection. 'Tis marvellous to behold such a Spiritual and Heavenly Creature as the Soul in all men, fervently loving, and in most men fondly doting upon a lump of Clay, a clod of Earth: It sympathizeth tenderly with it. If the meanest Member of the Body be in pain, the Soul is presently concerned for it, and evidences it self to be so, by commanding the eyes both to watch and weep; the Tongue to complain and moan; the Hands to bind up its Wounds with all imaginable tenderness, and carefully defend it from the least injurious touch: But if the whole be in danger, how do its nobler Faculties of Understanding, Memory and Invention, awaken and

bestir themselves to the uttermost for its deliverance and safety.

Whilst the Soul lives in union with the Body, 'tis filled with assiduous (and too often with exorbitant and distracting) cares for its necessary support and comfort. And when it must be separated from it by death, what strong averfations to death doth it ordinarily discover? The strong ties and bonds betwixt it and the Body, cannot be loosed without much conflict and struggling, evidenced by these Emphatical groans it sends forth; groans which other men understand not, nor can be supposed to understand, till they themselves come to feel the parting-Pull.

The reason of all which, lies in the intimate relation which is betwixt these different Natures, which God hath married together in the Womb, from which time they have been companions and partners in all the comforts and troubles of life. The Body is the Soul's house in which it dwells, and still shall dwell, till death dissolve it. 'Tis the Soul's Garment, that clothes and covers it. It hath worn this Garment of Flesh from the beginning, and is to wear it still, till Sickness hath brought it to Rags, and Death stript it from the Soul.

'Tis the Tool and Instrument by which it doth all its Works, whilst it is in this state of composition; and therefore the Soul cannot but love it fervently. No man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.

S E C T. II.

The case so standing betwixt the Soul and Body, the wisdom or folly of the Soul is plainly discovered in its way and manner of governing the Body, as the love and prudence of an Husband is in the government of his Wife; Or the Master in ordering the Affairs of his House; or the neat breeding of a Man in the comely wearing of his Garments; Or the skill and care of an Artificer in the brightness, keenness, and sharpness of his Tools.

Some Husbands give evidence to the world of their governing-prudence and ability, in such an allowance of liberty to their Wives, as the Laws of Conjugal Love require, and their Estates and Incomes will conveniently bear, and no more; and in restraining their Extravagances, as well as by encouraging their vertuous Courses, in keeping back no due encouragement to Vertue, nor giving the least encouragement unto Vice.

A well-bred man, that carries with him a becoming-sense of his Quality, and the *Decorum* he ought accordingly to observe, will wear his Garments decently, and becoming his Rank: They shall be sure to be neat and clean, and fit fit and comely upon his Body. He abhors to wear a Garment tumbled in the Mire, and go like a Beast, without regard to his Reputation.

No prudent Owner and Governour of an House, will let the Rain drop through the Roof, nor choak up the Passage to his Door with a nastiness.

fty Dung-hill. His House within shall be neat, and not nasty: The Rooms clean and comely: And yet abhors to suffer superfluous Ornaments, and costly Vanities to swallow up his Estate that should maintain it, and bring Bailiffs (more odious than a Dunghill) to his very Doors.

The curious Artificer neither grinds away the substance of his Instruments to make them bright and glittering, and set an Edge too fine to hold one minutes use; nor yet suffers them to be thrown aside in some neglected corner, where Rust and Flaws shall render them utterly useless, or make him blush at the botches such Instruments will cause in his Work.

The prudent *Husbandman* will neither break the heart of his Ground for want of rest and compost, nor yet over-load it with dressing, which brings forth nothing but rank and useless Weeds; He will in a fit season turn in a stream of Water to his Meadows, like a Cordial-draught to fainting spirits; but will not drown it, and rot the very roots of his Grass, by letting in too much, or by suffering it to lie under Water too long. He will feed his Horse high enough to perform his Journey, and carry him through the Mire; but will not feed him to such an heighth, that the Rider shall neither be able to sit, nor command him.

In all these cases, the common prudence of every man, directs him to that just mediocrity, wherein both his Honour and Profit do apparently lie. And what we say in such common cases and concerns as these, is as true, and much more excellent in the Soul's prudent government of its own Body, unto which it was espoused in
the

the Womb, and is its dear and constant Partner, both in present and future Good or Evil. 'Tis the Garment it wears, the Instrument it useth, and the Field it cultivates. It must neither deny the Body those necessary Supports and Comforts which God and Nature allow it, nor yet surfeit and overcharge it with more than it is able to bear. In either of these Extreams, the extream folly of the Soul is discovered.

S E C T. III.

Now the dethroning of Reason, and frequent Oppressions of Nature by the practice of *Drunkenness*, is the highest Exaltation of Folly in the Soul of Man; plainly manifesting its ignorance and inability to order and govern the Body, to which it is married by a vital Union.

Here's a foolish Soul by misgovernment, dishonouring, and destroying its vigorous and comely Body, under a pretence of Love and Kindness to it. We account it one of the greatest outward Infelicities in this World, incident to a discreet and virtuous Woman, to be headed and governed by a sottish Fool, neither able to govern himself, or her, nor give a reason of his own Actions or Commands. A Man whose folly shall make her blush in all sober Companies he comes into, and forces her upon such a Course of Life, as she perfectly abhors, and will bring speedy Ruin upon her; all Men pity such a Case as this. And this is the very Case of many a comely, vigorous Body.

Only such a Woman hath two reliefs under her Bondage, which the Body of a Drunkard wants.

wants. She can sometimes withdraw and retire from his Company, and enjoy the relief of her Solitude, which the wretched Body of a Drunkard cannot do till Death, but is tied day and night to the Company of its foolish Soul, which is frequently abusing it, and imposing upon it.

Besides, such a Woman may haply over-live her vicious, abusive Husband, and spend many a comfortable year in the World with a more discreet, sober, and religious Partner of her Life, whose Sobriety, Discretion, Piety, and Love shall make full Compensation for all those years of Misery and Slavery she endured before. But the Case before us, admits no such Relief: For as long as ever the Body lives and breathes, the Soul is, and must be with it, and in it. And tho' Death will for a time separate and divorce them, yet the Bodies second Marriage at the Resurrection can be with no other but the same Soul which oppressed and ruined it in this World. And this second Marriage will be far worse than the first. For tho' it were the sottish Souls slave and drudge in this World, and suffered many a sickness, shame, and loss by its Folly; yet in the World to come it must be its Partner and Companion in Hell-torments for evermore, in as much as it was the Instrument the Soul used in most of those Sins committed by it in this World. And this is the case of all Bodies married to, and governed by Souls that have neither Reason, nor Religion enough prudently and soberly to order and govern their own Bodies.

S E C T. IV.

Sad and doleful therefore are the Laments and Complaints of the Bodies of Drunkards, against the Folly and Tyranny of their Souls; and as just as sad. Let me therefore here act the part of an Advocate for your Bodies, which is a part of your selves, and to which by the Law of Nature you owe Love, Care, and Honour; or rather by a *Prosopopæa*, let me bring in the Body sighing out its own Complaints in the Ears of its own Soul, and thus bemoaning it self to it.

"Oh, my Soul! I have cause to lament the day that ever I was married to such a foolish Fool as thou art, who art destitute both of Wisdom and Love to Rule and Govern me. I may justly resume Job's Lamentation upon thy account, and say with him, *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said, there is a man-child conceived. Why died I not from the Womb? Why did I not give up the Ghost when I came out of the Belly? For now should I have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept; then I had been at rest.*

"I have been a perfect Slave and Drudge to thy unreasonable Lusts and Impositions. I was once an active, vigorous, comely Body, and hadst thou been Wise and Sober, I had been happy. But thou hast been a cruel Tyrant to me, oppressing and loading me with more than I was able to stand under. Thou hast plunged me many times into those puddles of Excess, wherein thou hast drowned thy own Reason, and my Health. My well-mixed Beauty is now

"turned

"turned into the colour of flaming Fire; my
 "Hands and Legs shake, my Tongue falters;
 "my natural Crasis and Temperament is destroy-
 "ed. Thou hast made me miserable in this World,
 "and intendest to make me more wretched in the
 "World to come.

"Sober Nature gave me my stint and measure.
 "I knew when it was enough, and gave thee suf-
 "ficient *Items* and Intimations (amidst thy
 "foolish Frolicks) that I could neither with Ho-
 "nour or Safety bear one Glass more. But thou
 "wast deaf to all my moans, and shewedst more
 "Mercy to thy Horse than me. Sick or well,
 "able or unable, live or die, I must take in the
 "full number of Cups and Bottles thou enjoynedst
 "me to take. Like another *Pharaoh*, thou hast re-
 "quired of me the full tale, whether I had strength
 "to perform it or no. Yea, like another Devil,
 "thou hast sometimes cast me into fiery *Fevers*,
 "and watry *Dropsies*; and will next cast me, if
 "thou continue this course, into Hell-fire it self.

"Other Souls have set thee a better Pattern in
 "their more sober and prudent Government of
 "their Bodies. They give their Bodies the true
 "Pleasure of the Creature, by keeping them to
 "that happy Mediocrity in which it consists.
 "They devote their Bodies to the Service of God;
 "thou hast devoted me to the immediate Service
 "of the Devil. A Majestick Beauty sits upon
 "their Faces; Sottishness and Folly upon mine.
 "Their Knees are daily bowed in Prayer to
 "God; mine shake and tremble in the Service
 "of the Devil. They enjoy pure and sanctified
 "Pleasures every day; but I am denied the sober
 "Pleasures of a Beast. Their Bodies will be hap-

"py

py with their Souls in the World to come; but
 "I must suffer Eternally with thee, and for thee.
 "Thou hast both consumed me, and thy Estate
 "given to support me; and now I am like to suf-
 "fer as much by want, as I have done by ex-
 "cess; and all this through thy misgovernment.
 "These Feet (if thou hadst pleased to command
 "them) would as readily have carried thee to
 "thy Closet, or the Assemblies of God's People,
 "as to an Ale-house, or Tavern. These Fingers
 "would have served to open and turn the blessed
 "Pages, which contain the Oracles of God, as
 "to Gog a Die, or have Shuffled and Dealt a Pack
 "of Cards. This Tongue might have been me-
 "lodiously employed in singing the Praises of
 "God among his People, as well as in Swearing,
 "Roaring, and Singing among drunken Sots and
 "Fools, if thou hadst been endued with govern-
 "ing Wisdom.

"Thou knowest I could do nothing without
 "thee. Thou hast a despotical Power over all
 "my Members. They are at thy beck, and thou
 "at the Devil's. Better had it been for me, had I
 "been the Body of a contemptible Worm or Fly,
 "than a Body animated and governed by such a
 "fottish Soul as thou art.

"And now, my Soul, what hast thou to say for
 "thy self? What tolerable account canst thou give
 "to God or me, of these thy vile Abuses of both?

S E C T. V.

Now let us hear what the Soul of the Drunk-
 ard hath to plead in its own Excuse and Defence
 for all his wrongs against God, mischiefs to it self,
 ruin

ruin to his Health, Name, and Estate. They have various Excuses, tho not one sound or rational one among them all. Such as they are, let them be tried by the Rule of Reason, if any Reason be yet left in them, who daily dethrone it by this worse-than brutish Practice.?

That which they have to say for themselves, is this,

1. That their Bodies are strongly constituted, more capacious to receive, and able to bear greater quantities of Wine and Strong-drink than others are; and therefore, why should they not drink down, and glory over those that vye with them.

2. Others say, They would not take that Course they do, but that when they are Sober and Solitary, they are so press'd with the thoughts of their Debts and Incumbrances in the World, that they are upon a perfect Rack, and they find nothing like good-fellowship in a Tavern or Ale-house, so effectually relieving against the Cares and Anxieties of their Minds.

3. Some will tell us, they are drawn into it by the snare of Pleasure, nothing being so grateful to their Palate, as their full load of generous Wine or Strong-drink. And seeing it is so pleasant and delightful to them, why should they deny and abridge themselves of their Pleasure?

4. Others will profess they had never taken this Course, which they find upon many accounts pernicious to them, but that they are not able in Civility to deny their intimate Friends and Companions, especially such with whom they have concerns in Trade and Business, and they must drink as they do, or suffer loss in their Trade, and beside that, be stigmatized for *Phanaticks*.

5. They

5. They will also say, they are obliged in point of Loyalty to pledg him that Consecrates (as they *Catechrestically* call it) the first Glas to the King, or Persons of Quality and Honour.

6. And lastly, some will tell us, They have plentiful Estates that will bear such Expences; and since their Pockets are full, why should not their Heads and Stomachs be so too?

Beside these six Apologies for *Drunkenness*, nothing falls into my Imagination pleadable for this Sin. We will weigh these that are pleaded, in the common Ballance of the Reason of Mankind, and try the validity of them one by one. And for the

Excuse I.

And first, to what you say of the Capacity of your Bodies, Strength, and Ability of your Constitutions, to receive and bear greater Quantities of Wine and strong Drink than others can; and therefore, why should you not give a proof of it when challeng'd, and get Reputation to your selves by drinking down, and glorying over such as vye with you?

To this I reply three things, which must be laid in the Counter-balance, and let the Ballance be held in the upright Hand of your own Reason.

1. A strong and vigorous Constitution will be readily acknowledged to be so great an external Blessing and Mercy, that no Man of sound Intellectuals ought to do any thing to destroy it; but is obliged to use all proper Methods for the Preservation of it. If therefore Temperance shall be found to preserve it, and excess to impair and destroy

destroy it; let your own Reason judge which of these two Courses you are obliged to take. Consult either the best Physicians, or your own, and other Mens Experience, and they will tell you, that *Apoplexies, Palsies, Gout*, and innumerable other Diseases, are bred by such Excesses in the soundest and strongest Constitutions, and Death it self hastened by such intemperate courses; whereas Temperance and Sobriety might have made your Lives more comfortable and durable. As strong as you are, frequent Drunkenness will bring *Cain's Curse* upon your vigorous Bodies, and make you go shaking and trembling (as he did) about the World.

2. Let it be demanded of your own Reason, Whether it do really judge that God bestowed more Strength and Vigour upon your Bodies, than he hath upon others, to Arm a stronger Enemy than others are, to fight more vigorously against him, than others do, or can do? Or whether it were not designed by him for greater Use and Service to his Glory in the World, than others of his People (how willing soever they be) can do for want of that strength you have? I am confident no Man of sound Intellectuals will dare to assert the former, or deny the latter.

3. And lastly, for your glorying in Drinking down, and conquering others, you will certainly put your own reason to a blush, by offering such a Plea as this to it. You are not yet arrived to Impudence enough to deny Drunkenness to be a Sin, and your Reason is yet sound enough, easily and naturally to infer, That by how much the more any Man exceeds and goes beyond others in Sin, by so much the greater Sinner that Man is.

And as for the Honour and Glory you talk of in exceeding others in your Abilities to drink, your Reason will quickly make you ashamed of that Glory; and prove, as well as assert it to be a Mark of basest Infamy.

Do you think that *Lombard* was really honoured, or stigmatized, whom *Tiberius Caesar* dub'd a Knight for drinking off three Gallons of Wine at one Draught, and Sirnamed him *Tricongius*, that is to say, the *Three Gallon Knight*; which Story *Pliny* in his *Nat. Hist. Lib. 14. Cap. 22.* Natural History relates to the perpetual Infamy of them both? Or, think you it added to the Glory of

Tiberius himself, who Knighted this *Three Gallon* (not thrice Gallant) *Knight*, to have his Name changed among the People, from *Tiberius* into *Biberius*, as afterwards they did the Name of that Monster *Nero* into *Mero*?

Gentlemen, I appeal to your own Reason, if the vast Continent you have within you for Wine and strong Drink, be really your Honour; whether the *Butt* or *Hogshead* whence you have it, be not for the same reason much more honourable than you? Your Reason will plainly give the Conclusion.

But, oh! consider not only what Reason saith, but what God the Fountain of that Reason saith in *Isa. 5. 22. Wo to them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. Methinks it should make you sit in as little ease upon the Tavern, or Ale-house Bench, as that Court-Parasite sat at a rich Banquet, furnished with variety of Dainties, and all sorts of generous Wine, over whose head Dionysius caused an heavy Sword*

Sword to be hanged with the Point downward by a single Hair, every moment ready to drop perpendicularly upon it.

Excuse II.

As for those that throw themselves into these Excesses on purpose to delude those anxious Cares and Thoughts, which cruciate and oppress them, whenever they are Sober and Solitary: I shall only propound three plain Questions to the small remainders of Reason in them, which yet I presume sufficient to determine rightly upon them.

Quest. I.

Whether they think that which greatly encreaseth Want and Poverty, be a rational Cure and proper Remedy of it? And whether a Jar of Oyl be not as fit to quench a Flame, as Tavern and Ale-house Scores and Reckonings are to buoy up a sinking Trade, and keep *Bailiffs* from Mens doors? Certainly none but a sottish Fool can think it to be otherwise. Your own improvidence, or God's afflictive Providence have brought you into other Mens Books; and certainly you cannot think, if you be in your Wits, that *Chamberlains* Bills for so many Bottles of Wine, and Flaggons of Beer, will be accepted by your Creditors for good Bills, to quit your Scores with them. Were you Sober, Frugal, and Industrious, you would put your selves thereby into a better way to obtain a Blessing from God, and Respects, and Forbearance from Men, than in the Course you now take.

Quest. 2.

Nor can you without manifest impudence propound such a Question as this to your own Reason, Whether the addition of Injustice to Prophaneness, be a rational Plea or excuse for it? And is not that the very case here? Whose Money is that you so lavishly and prodigally waste out of your consuming Estates? 'tis either your Creditors, or the small remains of your own. Whether the one or the other, methinks that Wine and Drink should not go down very pleasantly, which must be mingled with manifest injustice, or with the tears, and (in a sense) the Blood of your Wives and Children. If your Reasons can allow these things for Lawful Excuses, then you are excused, else self-condemned.

Quest. 3.

I shall trouble your Reason with the decision but of one Question more, and 'tis briefly and plainly this.

Whether the addition of far greater troubles, or causes of troubles to the inner man, be a proper expedient to alleviate and ease the loads and burdens of your outward troubles, already grown almost too heavy for you to bear.

I dare venture all that I am worth, upon found Reason's side, that it will never allow or corroborate such an absurdity, as the affirmative part of this Question draws along with it.

Believe it, Sirs, all the outward necessities, cares and fears, which now oppress you upon the score of worldly affairs (which frame not to your minds) are much more tolerable, and comparatively

tively light and easy, to the Stings, Wounds, and Lashes of a guilty Conscience: But when all these inward Troubles shall be superadded to your outward Troubles, they will in conjunction make a burthen too heavy for Man to bear.

What ever Cares or Troubles Providence involves any good Man in, in the honest and painful pursuit of his civil Calling, he may in a great measure relieve his burthened Spirit under them, by the comfortable Testimony of his own Conscience, and his free Addresses to God in Prayer. These will sweetly support him under his other Intanglements and Perplexities in the World. But the Course you take, does not only strike away these props from under your Minds; but doubles and trebles the burthen upon them. Were Men but once acquainted with that relief and cheariness of Spirit which a good Conscience and a Spiritual Address to God in Prayer, afford in the midst of Troubles, they would run to their Closets, rather than to Taverns and Ale-houses to divert and cure their Troubles. I leave it therefore before your own Reason to consider what weight or validity there is in this Second Excuse for Drunkenness.

Excuse III.

Others plead they are drawn into this Sin by Pleasure and Delight, whose Charms are too strong for them to resist.

In this, as in all the former, I resolve to make you your own Judges. Give me leave but to state the Questions right, and let your own Reason freely determine them. And what fairer dealing

can men that exercise Reason expect? And let the first Question be this;

Quest. 1.

Whether the Pleasures of Temperance do not far excel those of Intemperance? If they do, then this your Plea is vain and irrational. For you foolishly choose a lesser Pleasure, and refuse a greater and sweeter one. And that you do so in this case, no wise man can deny or doubt.

For temperate drinking refreshes the Body, and no way burthens it, as excessive drinking doth. And that which burthens Nature can never be equally pleasant with that, which yields nothing but due refreshment. Temperance doth not vitiate, but raiseth the pure and ordinate Appetite of Nature to its just pitch and height; in which temper, and at which height, it is most capable of the sweetest pleasure from the Creature. As the Strings of a *Lute* give us the sweetest and most delicious Notes when they are not let down too low, but are all fixed at their due height.

Temperance gives us the most pleasing Enjoyment of the good things of this Life, still leaving the Mind free and fit for the more Spiritual and sweet Enjoyments of a better and more excellent Life; which Excess never did, nor can do.

Moreover, Temperance maintains the manly grace and majesty of the Countenance, but Excess totally disguises it. It draws the lines of Drunkards faces into a form much like those ridiculous *Dutch Pictures*, which some set upon their Chimney-pieces, to move laughter in those that behold them.

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Now

Now by the vote of universal Reason, that Pleasure which refreshes the Body, but no way burthens it, which raises the ordinate and unviciated Appetite of Nature to its just pitch and due height, which gives Nature the sweetest refreshment, leaving it always fitter and freer for higher and better pleasures, which maintains the manly grace and majesty of the Countenance, and makes not a wise man look like a Fool or an Antick, must needs be better than the lower and flatter Pleasures of a burthened Body, and viciated Palate, which draw after them so great a train of present mischiefs (which Temperance avoids) besides far heavier and more durable ones in the Life to come.

Quest. 2.

But if the present Pleasures of Temperance were in some respect inferior to those of Excess (which I have proved they neither are, nor can be) I demand in the second place, whether the loss of your Honour and Health, your Time and Estate, your present Peace, and future hopes, do not make such sensitive Pleasures base and inferior, compared with those of Temperance and Sobriety? Do you in good earnest think a Glass or two above what satisfies and refreshes Nature, can recompence for all that shame, sickness, poverty and guilt that follows it? If you think so, sin hath turned you into Brutes, and made you utterly incapable of all Arguments and manly considerations to reduce and recover you.

Excuse

Excuse IV.

You say you would not haunt Taverns and Ale-Houses as you do, but that you are drawn in by Company and Business, which you cannot well resist or avoid, and should you do so, it would be to your loss; and besides that, you should be branded for *Phanaticks*.

I deny not but there is a Snare in vain Company; yet give me leave to propound a few, plain and easy Questions to your Reason.

Quest. 1.

Why must the importunity of Good Fellows (as you call them) be an irresistible Temptation to you, and deprive you of all power to deny them, whilst you discern the Snares and Mischiefs they draw you into? This seems to be a thing unaccountable to Reason. Suppose you were allowed to spend the longest Summers Day in the highest gratifications of all your Senses together, or successively one after another, upon condition that you would endure the Torments of the Rack till that day twelvemonth came about again; do you think the importunity of all your intimates in the world would prevail with you to accept the Pleasures of a day under such a condition as this? And yet what are the Torments of a year upon the Rack, to the Torments of Hell for ever and ever? Or to come lower; suppose one of those lewd Companions, not worth a Groat if every man had his own, should request you to lend him an Hundred Pound upon his own secu-

ity, could you find no power (think you) to deny him, especially if the loss of that Hundred Pound would certainly ruin you? If you would deny him (as I doubt not but in such a case you would) tell me then, why you should not find power to deny him when he asks a far greater matter than an Hundred Pound, even the Peace, Purity and Safety of your Souls, as well as the Health of your Bodies, and Honour of your Names? Why then should you be so easy and flexible when they ask the latter, and so stiff and unperfwadable to the former?

Quest. 2.

You say you have Business and Concerns in Trade to dispatch in such Places and Companies, and this draws you into the Snares of Excess. I will not deny but men may lawfully transact their Business in such Places, and there may be a conveniency, and sometimes a necessity for it: But that's not the Case. The Question referred to the determination of your Reason, is this, *Why Drunkenness must accompany Business?* and whether a man be not more fit to transact his Business, and drive Bargains of the greatest value, whilst his Body and Mind are cool, sober and temperate, than when his Reason is beclouded and deposed, by Drunkenness? How many men have undone themselves, their Wives and Children by Drunken-Bargains!

Besides, I must tell you, that in all such Drunken Meetings, the Devil comes to drive his Bargain with you, as well as your other Customers. He bids for your Souls, and offers you such Pleasures

as you there find in exchange for them, and is content to make your dying-day the time of your delivering them into his possession. How do you like such Trading as this, *Gentlemen*?

Quest. 3.

You say, should you refuse to accompany them, and do as they do, you should be branded for *Phanaticks*. I would fain know, whether such a Plea for Drunkenness as this, doth not justly cast the greatest reproach of *Phanaticism* upon your selves, and set a Mark of true Honour upon those men whom the world unjustly stigmatizes with that Title? *Gentlemen*, I do assure you the *Phanaticks* (as you call them) have reason to thank you for the Honour and Justice you have done them, in acknowledging them to be none of the Members of your hellish Society, but Persons of a more sober and honourable Character. And I appeal to your Reason, whether it would not be more for your Honour, to wear the unjust Title of a *Phanatick*, than the just censure of a Drunken Sot.

Excuse 5.

You say you are obliged in point of Loyalty to pledge him that consecrates the first Glass to the Health of the King, or any Person of Eminency. I leave it still to your Reason to be Judge,

1. Whether the King have cause to account the manifest breach of the Laws by which he governs, to be a signal expression of his Subjects

Loyalty to him? Is not his Royal Authority his Honour and Safety in his Laws? And is he not finely honoured, think you, by such drunken Loyalty as this? Gentlemen, you have a King over you of sounder Intellectuals, and more exemplary Temperance and Sobriety, than to be thus imposed upon.

2. Can you think he reckons his Health in the least degree advanced or secured by the ruin and subversion of his Subjects Health? No no; Did the genteelst Drunkards in *England* enquire, they would quickly find, it would more please him, if they would consult their own Health better, and pray for his more sincerely and fervently than they do.

Excuse VI.

Your last Excuse is, That you have plentiful Estates that will bear it; and since your Pockets are full, why should your Heads or Stomachs be empty?

Question.

The only Question I would here state, and leave your own Reason to determine, is this, Whether you think the expence of the redundancy and over-plus of your Estates in Excess and Drunkenness, be the very end and design God aimed at in bestowing those things with such a bountiful hand upon you? and whether the expence of it in this way, will please him as well, as if you clothed the Naked, and fed the Hungry with it, and brought

brought the Blessings of them that are ready to perish, upon you and your Families? Ah, *Gentlemen*, you must come to a day of reckoning. Your Reasons and Consciences can never tell you, you can make up as comfortable an account with God by setting down so many Hundred Pound in Wine and Strong Drink more than was necessary or beneficial: *Item* so many Thousand Pounds lost in Play: So much upon Whores; as if you set down so much to feed and cloath the Naked and Hungry. So that all your Excuses for this Sin, are baffled by your own Reason; and it was easy to conclude, that such a Traytor to Reason as Drunkenness is, which hath so often derbrowned it, could not possibly receive a more favourable Judgment and Sentence than this now given upon it.

Let all Drunkards henceforth consider what a voluntary madness the Sin of Drunkenness is, how it unmans them, and sets them below the very Brutes. A Grave Father calls it rightly

A Distemper of the Head; a subversion of the Senses, a tempest in the Tongue; the Storm of the Body, the shipwrack of Virtue, the loss of Time, a wilful madness, a pleasant Devil, a sugar'd Poyson, a sweet Sin, which he

Turbatio capitis, subversio sensus, tempestas lingua, procella corporis, naufragium virtutis, amissio temporis, insania voluntaria, blaudé Dæmon, dulce venenum, suave peccatum, quam qui habet, se ipsum non habet, quam qui facit, peccatum non tantum

facit, sed ipse totus est peccatum. that hath, hath not himself; and he that commits it, doth not only commit Sin, but himself is altogether Sin.

'Tis a Sin at which the most sober *Heathens* blushed. The Policy of the *Spartans* was more commendable than their Piety, in making Men drunk, that their Children might gaze upon them as a Monster, and be scared for ever from such an horrid Practice. He that is mastered by Drunkenness, can never be Master of his own Counsels. Both Reason and Religion condemn this Course. Make a Pause therefore where you are, and rather throw that Wine or Beer upon the Ground, which else will cast thy Body upon the Ground, and thy Soul and Body into Hell.

C H A P. V.

Containing the result and issue of the Third Consultation with Reason, upon the Case of Uncleanness; and the true Report of the Determination of every mans Reason, with respect thereunto.

S E C T. I.

THE Bountiful and Indulgent God hath made more abundant provision for the Pleasure and Delight of Rational, than of Brutal Beings: And his Wise and Righteous Laws order and limit their Pleasures to their great advantage; his Allowances under those Restrictions being large and full enough. Both Reason and Experience assure us, that the truest Pleasures are most freely and honourably to be enjoyed within the Pale and Boundary of his Laws; and that there are none fit for the enjoyment of a Man or Christian, so be found without or beyond them.

That prudent Owner provides best for his Cattel, who puts them into inclosed fragrant Fields, where they have plenty of proper and pleasant Food, Sweet and pure Springs of Water, the pleasant Covert of shady Trees, and all that is either necessary or convenient for them; altho' those Fields be so inclosed within Pales or Walls,

that they cannot stray without those Boundaries is to other mens Grounds, to be by them impounded, and brought back lank, tired, and dirty, to their Owner; or by straying into Wafts and Wilderesses, fall a Prey (as Straglers use to do) to Wolves and Lyons.

God envies not any true, rational and proper pleasure to Men or Women; when he bounds them in by his Command, within the allowance whereof, sufficient provision is made for the benefit and delight of propagation. And though it be all mens Duty, to tremble at the awful Solemnity, yet it would be any mans sin to repine and murmur at the strictness and severity of his Command delivered with Thunder and Lightning from Mount Sinai, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery.* Man's honourable Liberty, and God's wise and just Restraint and Limitation thereof, are both set together before our eyes, in that one Scripture, *Heb. 13. 4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* Here's a liberal allowance granted, and a severe Punishment threatned for the inordinancies and exorbitancies of boundless and ungovernable Lusts. God will judge with temporal Judgments in this world; and upon impatient persistents, with eternal Judgments in the world to come.

S E C T. II.

Such is the corruption of Man's Nature by the Fall, that it hates Inclosures, Restraints and Limitations. These things which were intended to regulate, serve only to sharpen and enrage their sensual

sensual Appetite. No-Fruit so sweet to corrupt Nature, as forbidden Fruit. *Nititur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata.* The very restraint of Evil makes it look like a pleasant and desirable Good. Sons of *Belial* can endure no yoke of restraint. There's a great truth in that Observation of the Divine *Herbert*, That if God had laid all common, man himself would have been the Incloser. For his Reason and Experience would have plainly informed him of the great and manifold advantages of distinction and propriety. How many Quarrels and barbarous Murders have been occasioned by Whores! which by keeping within God's bounds and rules, had been both honestly and honourably prevented.

Were Men left to that Liberty Brutes are, to scatter their Lusts promiscuously, Fathers would not know their own Children, nor Children their Fathers; whereby both their Duties and Comforts would be prescinded together. Such Mischiefs as these would make men glad of that Inclosure, which the Laws of God have made for them. But behold with admiration the perverse wickedness of Corrupt Nature, manifested in this, that because God hath enclosed and secured their Relations to them by his Laws (which Inclosure is every way to their advantage) yet this makes their Lusts the more head-strong and outrageous, and they cannot take that comfort in their own, because their own, that they think to find in another's, because another's.

Remarkable to this purpose is that Relation of Mr. *Firmin's*, which he received from his near Relation, who was Mini-

Real Christian, pag. 60.

ster

ster to the Company of *English Merchants in Prussia*. The *Consul* or Governour of that Company being a Married Man, and that to a very proper and comely Woman, was yet enslaved to others not to be compared with his own Wife for comeliness. This Minister dealt with him about it. One Argument he urged was this; That of all Men he had the least Temptation, having a Wife so comely, that few Women were like her. He answered, yea, were she not my Wife I could love her. Had she been his Whore, he could have loved her; he thought none like her; but because she was his Wife, hedged in by God, he cared not for her. Oh! what hearts have Men, that they should ever think that to be best for them, which is most cross to God! Why should stolen Waters be sweeter than those of our own Fountain?

S E C T. III.

God's choice must needs be far better for us than our own. Ordinate and lawful Pleasures and Enjoyments far better and sweeter than exorbitant and forbidden ones. And the Reason is evident and undeniable. For amongst all the operations of the Mind, its reflex acts are the acts that best relish pleasure. And indeed without self-reflexion, a man cannot tell whether he delights or no. All sense of pleasure implies some reflection of the Mind: And those pleasures of a man must needs be the sweetest, which afford the sweetest reflections upon them afterward: And those the basest pleasures, which are accompanied and followed

lowed with present regret, or the stinging and cutting reflections of the Conscience upon them afterwards.

Lawful and ordinate Enjoyments are as Honey without the Sting. Forbidden Pleasures are im-bitter'd and extinguished by these regrets and reflections of the Conscience, They are like that pleasant Fruit which the *Spaniards* found in the *Indies*, which were sweet to the taste, but so environed and armed on every side with dangerous Briers and Thorns, that they tore not only their Cloathes off their Backs, but the Skin off their Flesh to come at them: And therefore they called them *Comfits in Hell*; and such are all forbidden and unlawful Pleasures.

A Merchant (saith the forenamed Author) dining with the *Fryars* at *Dantzick*, his Entertainment was very noble. Pag. 63. After he had dined and seen all, the Merchant fell to commending their Pleasant Life. Yea, said one of the *Friars* to him) we live gallantly indeed, if we had any body to go to Hell for us when we die. You see what mingles with Mens Sensual and Sinful Lusts.

2. Your Honour is secured by keeping within God's Bounds and Limits. *Marriage is honourable in all.* Here Guilt can neither wrong your Consciences, nor Infamy your Reputations. Fornicators and Adulterers go up and down the world, as men burnt in the Hand: Their Conscience lashes them within, and men point at them abroad. They are a terror to themselves, and a scorn to men.

3. The

3. The Health of the Body is secured by chaste and regular Enjoyments; but exposed to destruction the other way. God hath plagued the Inordinacy of mens Lusts with most strange and horrid Diseases. That *Morbus Gallicus*, *Sudor Anglicus*, and *Plica Polonica* were Judgments sent immediately by God's own hand, as the Witnesses of his high displeasure, against the bold and daring contemnners of his sacred and awful Command. Thus as *Prov. 5. 11. They mourn at last, when their flesh and body are consumed.* Other sins are committed in the Body, but this against it, as well as in it.

4. The blast and waste of our Estates (which is the usual consequent of uncleanness) is prevented and avoided, by keeping within God's Rules. The truth of what the Scripture tells us, *Prov. 10. 5. is often exemplified before our eyes; that by reason of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a morsel of bread.* Adultery gives a man Rags for his Livery; it lodges his Substance in the House of Strangers, and entrails wants and curses on him and his.

5. In a word, Continence or lawful Marriage exposes not the Soul to the eternal wrath of God, as Uncleanness doth, *1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.* This sin does not only shut a man out of his own House, and the Hearts of good men, but out of Heaven it self, without thorow Repentance and Reformation.

S E C T. IV.

The case standing thus, 'tis matter of just Admiration how the Sin of Uncleanness should grow so Epidemical and Common, as it doth, seeing such as live in this filthy Course, must needs counteract and oppose their own Reason and Interest together. For they forsake God's way, which gives them as much liberty as can be reasonably desired, and cast themselves into a course of Life, clog'd with all manner of temporal and eternal Miseries of Soul and Body, Honour and Estate.

The plain Rule and Dictate of common Reason, which I laid down before, being applied to this particular Case, manifestly condemns it. For seeing Honesty and Chastity comprizes the true Pleasure, Profit, and Honour of the whole Man, is more congruous to humane Nature, and Preservative of it, it ought therefore to be preferred in the Estimation and Choice of all Men to unlawful adulterous Pleasures, which (for the Reasons above) are inferior in themselves to chaste, conjugal Enjoyments; and besides that, are attended and followed with such a Train of present and future Miseries, destructive to the whole Man.

And yet for all this, to the amazement of all serious Observers, never was any Age more infamous for this Sin, than the present Age is, and that under the clear shining Light of the Gospel.

What the special Causes and Inducements to the overflowing and abounding of this Sin, are in the present Age, will be well worth the enquiring and sitting at this time

S E C T.

S E C T. V.

Inducement 1.

'Tis highly probable the influencing Examples of great Men have had no small hand in the spreading of this abominable and crying Sin amongst all inferior Ranks and Orders of Men.

Great Mensill Examples, like a bag of Poyson in the Fountain, corrupt and infect Multitudes. The Vulgar think they are priviledged, or at the least very much excused, when they do but follow the Presidents and Examples of Great and Eminent Persons.

But this will be found a weak and foolish Plea for Uncleanneſs, which will never be able to endure the test of your own Reason. For the inbred Notions of a God, and of a future Life of Retribution being so firmly sealed and engraven upon humane Nature, that they can never be utterly eradicated; your own Reason will argue from those inbred Notions in this manner, and how you will be able to refel the Argument, and escape Conviction and Self-condemnation, quite surmounts my Imagination, whatever it do yours. And thus it will dispute, and *Dilemma* you, do what you can.

That God, before whom greater and lesser, honourable and baser Sinners shall appear in Judgment, will be either partial or impartial in his Judgments upon them. There is, or there is not Respect of Persons with him. If there be (which both his Nature and Word utterly deny) then those great and honourable Adulterers or Fornicators,

cators, whose Examples you follow, may haply be excused for their Eminency and Honours sake; but you that have no such Eminency and Honour in the World, as they have, must be condemned, tho you thought to escape as well as they.

But if there be no Partiality, or Respect of Persons with God (as most assuredly there is none) then both greater and lesser, honourable and baser Adulterers must be condemned together to the same common and intolerable Misery.

So that to take any (tho the least) encouragement to Sin from the Presidents and Examples of Great Ones, is a most senseless and irrational thing, utterly unworthy of one that believes there is a just and impartial God; and he is worse than a Devil that believes it not. For the Devils themselves believe and tremble.

S E C T. VI.

Inducement 2.

But others would persuade us they are drawn into this Sin by a kind of inevitable necessity, they being neither able to contain, nor Marry.

They are not yet arrived to Estate sufficient to maintain a Family with Reputation: But when they have gotten enough by Trade, or by the fall of their paternal Estates to live in equal Reputation with their Neighbours, then they design to alter their Course of Life, and abandon these Follies.

But, *Reader*, if this be thy Plea for Unclean-ness, thou shalt have as fair a Tryal for a foul Fact,

Fact, as thine own heart can desire ; be still thine own Judg, and let thine own Reason give a fair Answer to these three pertinent Questions.

Quest. 1.

Whether Whoredom be as likely and promising a way to engage God's Blessing upon your Trades and Employments, as Continnence or conjugal Chastity are? That is to say plainly, Whether Obedience and Disobedience to the Law of God, be all one, and please him alike? You know your success of Business is not in your own hand; 'tis God that giveth thee Power to get Wealth. His Blessing maketh Rich. And is Sin as likely a way to engage his Blessing, as Duty and Obedience is? I am confident your own Reason will never give it.

Object. If you say such Persons prosper in the World, as well as others for ought you can see.

Sol. The contrary is evident in the common Observation of Mankind; by reason of Whoredom, Multitudes are brought to a piece of Bread. And tho God suffer some unclean Persons to prosper in the World, yet Chastity with Poverty, is infinitely preferable to such accursed Prosperity.

Quest. 2.

Whether the Course of Sin you are now driving and accustoming your selves to, will not in all probability so infatuate and bewitch you, that when you come into a married Estate, you shall still be under the Power of this Sin, and so

ruin

ruin the Person you Marry, as well as your self?
If the Word of God signify any thing with you,
it signifieth this, that there is a Witchcraft in
Whoredom; and comparatively speaking, None
that go to her return again, neither take they hold of
the Paths of Life, Prov. 2. 18, 19.

Object. If to invalidate this Testimony you shall
say, That he that spake this, did himself go after
strange Women.

Sol. 'Tis true, he did so; but then withal,
you must remember, that he hath warned you by
his own sad Experience, that you never follow
him in those his footsteps, Eccles. 7. 26. *I find*
(saith he) *more bitter than death, the woman whose*
heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands.
Whoso pleaseth God, shall escape from her; but the sin-
ner shall be taken by her.

Quest. 3.

And lastly, I demand of your reason, whether
it can, or will allow any place to this Plea of ne-
cessity, before you have used and tried all God's
appointed Remedies, which are sufficient to pre-
vent that necessity you plead.

There are lawful Remedies enough, sufficient
with God's blessing to keep you from such a ne-
cessity to Sin; such as Temperance, and more
abstemiousness in Meats and Drinks; avoiding
lascivious Books, Play-houses, and filthy Com-
pany; laborious Diligence in your lawful Cal-
lings, and fervent Prayer for mortifying and
preventing Grace; and if Temptations still stir
amidst all these preventives, then casting your
selves upon the Directions and Supply of Provi-
dence

dence in the honourable Estate of Marriage. Never plead necessity, whilst all these preventives might, but have not been used.

S E C T. VII.

Inducement 3.

Others plead the absence of their lawful Remedies, and presence of tempting Objects. This is the Case of our Soldiers and Seamen. But tho this be the most colourable pretence of all the rest, yet your own Reason and Consciences will even in this Case so *Dilemma* and *Non-plus* you, that if you will adventure upon the Sin, you shall never have their leave or consent with you. For they have a special and peculiar consideration of you, as Persons more eminently and immediately exposed to the Dangers of Death than other Men. And thus (would you but give them a fair hearing) they will expostulate and reason out the matter with you.

Either thou shalt escape, or not escape the hazard of this Voyage or Battel. If thou fall (as to be sure many will) will this be an honourable, safe, and comfortable close and winding up of thy Life! What, from a Whore to thy Grave! God forbid. From burning Lusts to everlasting Burnings! Better thou hadst never been born.

Or if thou do escape and return again to thy Family, how canst thou look her in the Face, with whom thou hast so basely broken thy Marriage Vow and Covenant? Whatever else thou bring home with thee, to be sure thou shalt bring

bring home Guilt with thee, and a Blot never to be wiped away.

Object. If you say, you are not such Fools to publish your own Shame, you'll follow *Cæsar's* Advice to the young Adulterer, *Si non castè, tamen cautè*; If I act not chastly, I'll act cautiously.

Sol. Your Reason and Conscience will both decide the Weakness and Folly of this Pretence. For they both very well know, no Man sins so secretly, but he sins before two infallible Witnesses, *viz.* God and his own Conscience, and that the last and least of these, is more than a thousand Witnesses. That God usually detects it in this World, carry it as closely as you will; but to be sure, it shall be published as upon the House-top, before Men and Angels in the great Day.

S E C T. VIII.

Inducement 4.

Another Inducement to this Sin, (and the last I shall mention) is the *Commonness* of it, which abates the Shame of it.

What need they trouble themselves so much, or be so shy of that which is practiced by thousands, which is so frequently acted in every place, and little made of it?

But if either your Reason or Conscience will admit this Plea for good and lawful, the Devil hath utterly blinded or infatuated the one or other, as will evidently appear by the following Reasons. For,

Reason

Reason I.

If the thing be Evil, (as you cannot deny but it is) then by how much the commoner, by so much the worse it must needs be. Indeed, if a thing be good, by how much the commoner, so much the better; but to attribute this essential Property of Good unto Evil, is to confound and destroy the difference between them, and make Good and Evil both alike.

Reason II.

If the commonness of Uncleanness will excuse you, it will more excuse all others that shall commit this Sin after you; and still by how much more the numbers of Adulterers and Fornicators are increased, still the less scruple Men need make to commit it; and so the whole Community shall in a little time be so infected and defiled, that Christian Kingdoms shall quickly become like Sodom, and God provoked to deal with them, as he did by that wretched City.

Reason III.

If the commonness of Sin be an Excuse and Plea for it, suppose the Roads should be more infested than they are with Highway-men, so that every Month you should see whole Cart-loads of them drawn to Tyburn; would your Reason infer from thence, that because Hanging is grown so common, you need not scruple so much, as you were wont to do, to Take a Purse, or

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Pistol an honest innocent Traveller upon the Road?

Object. If you shall say, Uncleanneſs is not ſo coſtly a Sin as Robbery is, there's a great deal of difference between Tyburn, and a Whore-houſe puniſhment.

Sol. There is a great difference indeed, even as much as is betwixt Tyburn and Hell, or a ſmall Muſt in the Courts of Men, and the Eternal Wrath of a Sin-revenging God. So great will the difference betwixt the Punishments of all Sins by God, and by Men be found.

Thus you ſee, *Gentlemen*, the common Pleas for Uncleanneſs over-ruled by your own Reaſons and Conſciences.

We live in a plentiful Land, abounding with all the Comforts of this Life, and with thouſands of full-fed Wantons, of whom the Lord complains this day, as he did of the *Jews*, whom that flowing-land vomited out, *Jer. 5. 7. When I had fed them to the full, they committed Adultery, and aſſembled themſelves by Troops in the Harlots houſes; they were as fed Horſes in the morning, every one neighed after his Neighbours Wife.* How many ſuch Stallions are thus neighing in the fat Paſtures of this good Land!

Nor do I wonder at all to ſee the growth of *Atheiſm*, in a Land ſwarmed and over-run with ſo many thouſands of Blaſphemers, Drunkards, and Adulterers. It was a grave Obſervation of that gallant Moralift, *Plutarch*, If *Epicurus* (ſaith he) ſhould but grant a God in his full Perfections, he muſt change his Life preſently, he muſt be a Swine no longer.

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The Lord purge out this crying Abomination also, with Atheism and Drunkenness the inlets of it, which darken our Glory, and threaten to make us desolate.

C H A P. VI.

Wherein Reason and Conscience are once more consulted about that bitter and implacable Enmity, found in thousands this day, against all serious Piety, and the strict Professors thereof, who differ from them in some external Modes and Rites of Worship, and their Determination upon that Case impartially reported.

S E C T. I.

MAN is naturally a sociable Creature, delighting in Company and Converse. He that affects to live by, and to himself, must be (saith the Philosopher) ἢ ἀνέριον, ἢ θηῆς, either a God that is self-sufficient, and stands in need of none; or a Wild Beast so savage and fierce, that it can endure nothing but it self.

This natural Quality of sociableness is diversly improved. Sometimes *sinfully* in wicked Combinations to do mischief, like the herding together of Wolves and Tigers. Such was the Confederation,

federation of *Simeon* and *Levi*, Brethren in Iniquity, *Gen.* 49. 56. Sometimes 'tis improved *Civilly* for the more orderly and prosperous Management of human Affairs. Thus all civilized Countries have improved it for common Security and Benefit. And sometimes *Religiously*, for the better promoting of each others spiritual and eternal Good.

Now the more firmly any Civil or Religious Societies are knit together by Love, and coalesce in Unity, by so much the better they are secured against their common Enemies and Dangers, and become still the more prosperous and flourishing within and among themselves. For when every Man finds his particular Interest involved in the publick Safety and Security, (as every private Cabbin and Passenger is in the safety of the Ship) every particular Person will then stand ready to contribute his uttermost Assistance for the publick Interest both in Peace and War. United Force, we all know, is more than single; and in this Sense we say, *Unus homo, nullus homo*; one Man is no Man, that is, considered disjunctively and alone; when yet that single Person standing in a proper place of Service in the Body, may by his Prudence and Courage, signify very much to the Publick Weal of his Country; as *Fabius* did to the *Roman* State, of whom the Poet truly observed,

Unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem.

That one Man by his prudent Delay and Conduct, hath saved the whole Commonwealth.

S E C T. II.

'Tis therefore the undoubted Interest of Christian States and Churches, to make every individual Person's useful as may be to the whole, and to enjoy the Services of all their Subjects and Members, one way or other, according to their different Capacities, that it may be said of them (as the Historian speaks of the Land of Canaan) that there was in it, *Nihil infructuosum, nihil sterile*; not a shrub but bare some Fruit.

No prudent Kingdom or Church, will deprive themselves of the benefits they may enjoy by the Services of any considerable Number of Men (especially if they be able and good Men) without a plain inevitable necessity. No Man without such a necessity will part with the Use and Service of the least Finger or Toe, much less with a Leg or Arm; but would reckon himself half undone, if a *Paralytick* Disease should strike one half of the Body, and render it utterly useless to defend and succor the other Part in time of danger.

S E C T. III.

Much so stands the Case with Churches and Kingdoms, when the causeless and cruel Enmity of one part, prevails so far against the other, as to deprive that State or Church of the Use and Service of Multitudes of good and faithful Members.

It is Folly in its highest exaltation, for one part of a Nation, out of bitter Enmity to the other,

other, not only to seek all ways and means to suppress and ruin it, whilst a common Danger hangs over the whole; but to rejoyce in the Miseries of their Brethren, as the principal thing which they fancy would contribute to the great Advantage of their Cause. What but a general Punishment (if that will do it) can work Mens hearts into a more general Compassion?

The Histories of those times sufficiently inform us, That the great Feuds and Factions in the *Western Church*, not only immediately preceded, but opened the way to the terrible Inundations of the *Goths* and *Vandals*. Whilst the suffering Part cries out, *Cruelty, Cruelty*; those that inflict it cry, as loud, *Justice, Justice*. Whatever rational Apologies or Methods of Peace come from the oppressed Party, are censured by the other as Murmur and Mutiny. All Men commend Unity, and assert it to be the Interest of Kingdoms and Churches. They wish all Men were of one Mind, but what Mind must that be? To be sure, none but their own.

The more cool, prudent, and moderate Spirits of each Party, may strive to the uttermost to allay these unnatural Feuds and Animosities. The Wisdom of the governing-part may take the Instruments of Cruelty out of their hand; but 'tis God alone that can pluck up the roots of Enmity out of their hearts.

And what is the matter, when all is sifted and examined? Why, the matter is this; some will be more serious, strict, and conscientious, than others think fit or necessary for them to be. They dare not Curse, Swear, Whore, and be Drunk.

as others do. They scruple to comply with what God hath not commanded, and the very Imposters confess to be indifferent antecedently to their Command. They reverently mention the Name of God without an Oath, and the solemn Matters of Religion, without a Jest in their Company. They will assume as much Liberty to reprove Sin, as others do to commit it. They take more pleasure in heavenly Duties and holy Conferences, than in Ranting and Roaring in Taverns and Alehouses. That is, in a word, they live up to the Principles of Religion, which all pretend to; and this is their unpardonable Crime, a fault never to be expiated by any less punishment than their destruction.

And are not People (think you) come to a fine pass, when the strictest Obedience to the Laws of God shall be accounted more criminal, than the most open and profane Violation of them? Nay, tho they reprove the other Parties Sins no other way, but by their more serious and religious Lives; yet this alone shall be sufficient to make them culpable and obnoxious.

S E C T. IV.

If the Party thus generally hated and maligned, be (for the generality of them) serious and godly Christians; or if the strictness and holiness of their Lives, and tenderness of their Consciences be the true Ground and Reason of our hatred of them; such an hatred, when it becomes general, is a direful presage of some common Calamity and Misery hastning upon such a People, Hof. 9. 7. *The days of visitation are come, the*

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days of recompence are come, Israel shall know it; the Prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad; for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

And our own Reason will give us this Conclusion, as well as Scripture. For whatsoever brings Sin to its full maturity, must needs hasten Judgments. And what can heighten and accent the Sins of a People more than such a cruel hatred of good Men upon the score and account before given? All hatred of Godliness hath a tang of Devilishness. 'Tis a desperate flying in the very Face of God, whose Image Holiness is. Sin can scarce be graduated a peg higher.

Reason tells the Husbandman, 'tis time to Mow and Reap his Corn when it is full Ripe. And it may convince you, that God's time of reaping down a sinful People is near, when their Sins are grown to such full maturity as this. *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get ye down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great, Joel 3. 13.*

S E C T. V.

The true Cause and Rise of this great and fixed Hatred amongst professed Christians (whatever may be pretended to salve Reputation) is the Contrariety and Repugnancy of the Natures and Principles by which the Godly and Ungodly are governed. There is an Enmity betwixt the two Seeds, *Gen. 3. 15.* And this Enmity runs down in a Blood, more or less in all Ages and Places, *Gal. 4. 29. As then, he that was born after*

the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now. So it was, and so it is, and so it will be, till Conversion changeth the heart and principle. This Enmity cannot die, whilst Satan lives, and rules in the hearts of Children of Disobedience.

And the Enmity is mutual. *An unjust man is an abomination to the just; and he that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked, Prov. 29. 27.* Only with this difference; The good Man hates, *Non virum, sed vitium*, not the Person, but his Sin. The wicked Man hates both the Person of the Godly, and his Godliness too; yea, the Person for his Godliness sake.

This hatred of the Godly, secretly and habitually lurks in the Nature of a wicked Man, as Rapaciousness doth in a young Wolf that never saw a Lamb. It extends it self universally to the whole Kind, and reaches those, whose lives are most obligingly sweet; yea, those that are bound to them in the strictest Bonds of Nature. As we may see in that most unnatural Instance of *Cain's* murdering his own Brother *Abel*. It discovers it self in seeking the Destruction of them they hate upon a Religious account, and in rejoycing at any Evil that befalls them. Nothing is more grateful to them, than any occasion to disgrace and expose them with contempt to the World.

S E C T. VI.

But tho the strictness and holiness of good Men, causing the Consciences of wicked Men privately to condemn, and inwardly to gaul and grate

grate them for their looseness and profaneness, be the true and real Ground and Cause of the Grudge and Hatred; yet they think it fit for Reputation sake, that this be wholly suppressed and silenced, and something else pretended for the Cause and Reason of it, else it would look too like the Devil himself. And therefore amongst other plausible Pretensions for their Malignity to those that are better than themselves, these three are principally insisted on, and pleaded.

1. That it is not their *Piety*, but their *Hypocrisy* which they hate. Not because they have indeed more Piety than others, but because they make more vain Shew and Ostentation of it, than themselves do; who, setting aside their ridiculous *Grimaces*, and affected phantastick Words and Actions, are every whit as good as themselves.

2. Because under a pretence of greater strictness in Religion, they do but hatch and carry on Sedition and Rebellion; and that the World will never be quiet, whilst such Vipers are suffered in the Bowels of it.

3. That both the former have been made sufficiently evident and apparent in several former, and more recent Instances of the Hypocrisy and seditious Designs of as high Pretenders to Religion and Reformation, as those are, whom they truly hate, and would not suffer them to live, if their Power were answerable to their Hatred.

As to this first Plea, *viz.* Their Hypocrisy, 'twill quickly be found to be too thin and weak,

to endure the Test of your own Reason and Consciences. For how will you answer them, when they shall thus argue and expostulate the matter with you?

You that thus Censure, and those that are censured for Hypocrisy by you, do both profess one and the same Religion. Your profane Lives are notoriously contrary to all the Principles of this Religion. You Swear, Drink, Whore, Revile, and Persecute the others, only because you fancy their Tones, Gestures, &c. to be some way or other indecent. You cannot deny, but they live Soberly and Godly. They attend upon all the Duties of Religion strictly and conscientiously. Your Malice against them can find nothing to carp at, but some little Trifles, with which the Essence of Religion is not concerned. Did they run into the same excess of riot with you, greater matters than these would be over-looked, yea, and applauded too.

Now let Reason and Conscience say, who is most likely to be the Hypocrite, the Man that calls himself a Christian, and under that Profession wallows in all profaneness, not once censuring himself for it; or he that lives Soberly and Godly, against whom Malice it self can produce nothing but such inconsiderable Trifles as these? Is not this the very Case which Christ hath determined to our hands, and made such Censurers the Hypocrites, *Matth. 7. 3.* *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy Brothers eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?* It was but one blemish, and that a very small one too, but a Mote; however this you can quickly spy, and as rashly censure. But mean while there's a

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Beam, an horrid flagitious wickedness in your selves; but 'tis too near your own Eyes to be discerned by you. Which of these two (think you) is the Hypocrite?

2. But what if this *Mote* that you discern, be but a fancy, a meer imagination of your own, how will that aggravate your Sin, and evince both your Malice and Hypocrisy together? You say their Tones and Gestures in Religious Duties are Ridiculous and Scenical. This you take up lightly against some few of them, and as unjustly apply unto the aspersing of the whole Party, which your own Reason must and will immediately condemn. For there are multitudes of that Party, whose Countenances, Tones, and Gestures, are as decorous, grave, and becoming the presence of that God with whom they they have to do, as any Men in the World.

3. And as for those few whom you thus blemish for their indecent Tones or Gestures; what if those Tones you speak of, amount to no more, but natural Defects, and unavoidable Infirmities, which they would, but cannot help? Do they for this, and no worse than this, deserve to be censured and condemned for Hypocrites? Or, what if they be insensible Actions, occasioned by the greater Intention of their Spirits in the Service of God? May not those very things which you profanely flout, censure, and scoff at, either not all be noted as blemishes to their Devotion by the Eye of God, or noted with Approbation and Delight, as the effects of spiritual fervency in his Service? Certainly, Gentlemen, you are no good Marks-men, that neither draw the right Arrow, nor level at the true mark.

4. And were not this a vain and empty Pretence to cover your own Malice against Godliness; how comes it to pass that more Scenical Habits, Words, and Gestures, should pass as Ornaments in others, whom you affect? Whether this be not partiality unworthy of a Man, let Reason and Conscience freely judge.

In a word, What Commission or Authority, can you produce thus to ascend the Throne of God, and draw your bitterest Censures through the very Hearts of Gods People for such pitiful Trifles as these; first condemning them as Hypocrites, which is a most unwarrantable Presumption; and then persecute them as far as you can for their presumed Hypocrisy? Have a care what you do; be not Mockers, lest your Bonds be made strong. This is a Sin which hastens National Desolation, 2 Chr. 36. 16, 17. *They smacked the messengers of God, and despised his Word, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his People, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who slew their young Men with the Sword, &c.*

Plea II.

You say, 'Tis not Godliness you hate, and would persecute; but they are a sort of Persons, who under a pretence of Zeal for Religion and Reformation, design nothing else but Sedition and Rebellion; that the Nation will never be quiet, whilst such Vipers are suffered to live in it; and to fortify this Plea, you add, that both their Hypocrisy and Sedition have been made sufficiently evident to the World in many Instances.

Zeal

Zeal for the Laws, and Security of the Government, if rightly tempered and qualified, is highly commendable; and wherever Sincerity animates, and Prudence governs it, it ought by no means to be discouraged. But there are too many Grounds and Causes of Suspicion, that both these will be found wholly wanting, or extremely defective in many high Pretenders to it, when it comes to be sifted to its bottom Principles, and weighed in the just Ballance of sound Reason.

For if you be inflamed with a pure Zeal for the Laws and Government you live under, then you will find your selves obliged for your own Vindication to satisfy the just Expectation of your own, and other mens Reasons and Consciences in the following Particulars.

Expectation I.

First; Reason and Conscience in your selves and others, will expect it from you, that you of all Men living should be most precisely and punctually Obedient to all those just and good Laws you live under, since your Zeal burns so hot against those that comply not punctually with them. For those that make so much Conscience (as you seem to do) of other Mens Offences against the Laws, must be presumed (if your Profession be sincere) to make at least as much Conscience of breaking any of them in your own Persons; else neither Reason nor Conscience will ever admit this Plea of yours for sound and good.

Now

Now the Laws sometimes appoint Punishments for Non-conformity to the Rites and Ceremonies, affixed to the publick National Worship; and so they do always for convicted Swearing, Drunkenness, and Adultery. All these Laws have the very same Sanction by the Authority we live under. They forbid, and punish the one as well as the other. And if there be any difference, it lies in this, that these latter are expressly forbidden and threatned by God, antecedently to the Magistrate's Prohibition of them, which hath no small weight in the matter under consideration.

Now if any Man shall pretend Zeal and Conscience against dissent in Judgment or Practice from the Church, but makes no Conscience at all to Curse and Swear, be Drunk or Unclean; he will find it a difficult task to perswade his own, or other mens Reasons or Consciences, that this his Zeal for the Laws and Government, is sincere and pure. For were it so, it could never allow him to live in the notorious Violation of the Laws himself, which he is so fierce and bitter against others for.

Expectation II.

Secondly, If your Zeal be sincere, it will contain it self within the Bounds and Limits of the Offence, and not lay hold upon the Innocent, as well as upon the Guilty, and make you hate and persecute them that were never Turbulent and Seditious, equally with the greatest Criminals. If you will hug this Principle, as things stand now, Reason will tell you, 'tis as just at all other times, as it is at this.

Would

Would you not think it an unreasonable and most injurious thing to be plucked out of your Shops, or Houses, and hurried away to the Goal, because two or three dissolute Fellows in the City or Town where you live, have been Riotous or Seditious, tho you possibly know not the Men, nor can be so much as justly suspected of any Confederacy with them? True Zeal for the Laws and Government is content to wait, and suspend its Revenges, till a fair Conviction have passed upon the Guilty. And when it falls upon them, 'tis careful that it touch none besides them; but suffers a Man to retain in the very height of it, due Love and Honour for all that are Innocent.

If Christians be first denominated by general Titles and Terms of distinction, which they cannot help, and then the Crimes of any particular Person, that the World pleases to denominate as one of the same Party, must be charged and imputed to the whole; what must the consequence of this be, but that the whole Community become obnoxious to Punishment, and the very Government it self thereupon be dissolved?

For I take it to be past denial or doubt, that some of each Denomination have been, are, or may be guilty of seditious Practices. Some Hypocrites will lurk among those vast Bodies of People under the most strict and watchful Government; but God forbid their guilt should affect the whole Body, under whose Name they shelter themselves. God, Reason, and Conscience do all command the hottest Zeal to make

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its Pause and just Distinction here. Let the Guilty be brought to Condign Punishment upon fair Tryal and Conviction. This Discourse designs no Favour for such. But let not those who abhor their Wickedness, and are as pure from their Crimes as your selves, suffer with them, or for them. For then your Reason will tell you, your selves are as liable to sufferings as they, and that your Zeal is not kindled by love to Justice, but the hatred of a Party.

It is not in the Body Politick, as in the Body Natural. If the hand Steal, the feet are justly laid in Irons, and the Neck put into an Halter; because all the Members of the Body Natural are animated and governed but by one Soul. But in the Body Politick every Individual hath a distinct Soul of his own, and therefore that Member only that offends, ought to be punished, and all the rest to enjoy their full Liberty and Honour as before. Away therefore for ever with this Church and State-destroying Sybarche.

Expectation III.

Thirdly, If there be a change made upon the Laws, and they shall at any time tolerate and protect that Party and Practice which once they made Criminal; then your Reason, and every Mans else will expect from you (if your Zeal for the Laws and Government be sincere and unfeigned) that your Countenance and Carriage to that People be changed and altered, according to the different aspect of the Laws and Government

vernment upon them: That your Envy and Hatred cease with the offence, and that you be as ready to assist and encourage them, when they act according to Law, as you formerly were to afflict and prosecute them for acting contrary to Law; else, pretend what you will, 'tis plain enough, that it was not Zeal for the Laws and Government, but somewhat else (which every Body may guess at) that inflamed your Rage against them.

For whensoever the Wisdom of the Government finds it necessary by Toleration to take away the Crime and Offence, it must necessarily take away this very Plea for Hatred and Persecution with it. Otherwise it would be all one to act for Law, and against Law; to punish them that are Offenders, and them that offend no more than your selves; to turn the Edg of your Rage and Fury against those that undermine the Government, and those that are as Zealous as your selves to support and defend it by their Persons and Purfes.

Expectation IV.

Fourthly, Your Reason will justly expect it from you, that when or wheresoever you shall see eminent Piety meeting with punctual Conformity in one Man, that Man shall be your very Darling, and that both these Qualifications should recommend him to your dearest Affection. The more strictly godly he is, the more conformable he is to the Laws of God; as well as by his punctual Compliance with enjoyned Rules and Rites of Worship to the Laws of Men.

Men. If he be a Man of Catholick Charity to all of every Perswasion, whom he judges to fear God, and be truly conscientious; if he boldly and impartially reprove Sin wherever he finds it, tho it be in his own Patron, or Men of his own Profession; you will still love him the more for that. For if Sincerity and Conformity (as you pretend) be the very things which you make such a Noise and Bussle for in the World, here you have them both in conjunction. This is the Man you seem to seek (by these Pleas of yours) for a Pattern and Standard to reduce other Men to.

And is it really so, Gentlemen, with you? Do you heartily affect and prize a strict and serious Conformist, that fears not to expose the odious Shamefulness and Wickedness of profane Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness, and Uncleaness, without respect of Persons, both in his Pulpit and private Converses? Do you love him the better for his plain dealing with your Consciences, in detecting the grand Cheat of Formality in Religion; for his close cutting Convictions of the insufficiency of meer Civility to your Salvation, and the indispensable necessity of Regeneration? Do you heartily Love and Honour him for thundering you out of Ale-houses and Taverns, unto your Family and Closet-duties? "For telling you plainly, "your Love must not be confined to your "own Party, but extended to all that fear "God, however they be externally distinguish- "ed among Men? Nay, for convincing you "plainly, that Religion lies not in external
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"Modes and Rites, in Standing, Kneeling, or Responses? That the Name and Cry of *the Church, the Church*, will as little avail to your Salvation, as the cry of the Superstitious and Profane Jews, *the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these?* That true Religion is an inward, serious, spiritual thing, consisting in, and evidencing it self by the Mortification of your Sins, and real devotedness of your Hearts to the Lord?

If such a Man as this will please, and delight your very hearts; then my Reason is bound to conclude, there may be reality in what you pretend. But if you shall hate and loath such a Man as this, equally with a professed Dissenter, you must excuse me, and all the Rational World with me, if we shall conclude, that it is not true Zeal for the Laws, for the Church, or for the sincerity and peaceable Lives of its Professors, but an inward, rooted Enmity at Religion it self, that sets you on work under the feigned pretences of other things.

Expectation V.

Fifthly, Your Reason will expect and exact it from you, that whensoever you shall be convinced that all these Stirs and Bussles that have been in the World, all this Fining, Imprisoning, and Impoverishing your Protestant Brethren and Neighbours for their Conscience-sake, hath done the Church no good, but given a great and real Advantage to our common Enemy to ruin us together; that we may distinguish our selves
how

how we please in our *Folly*, but they will never distinguish us in their *Fury*; for we are all known to them by one common Name of *Hereticks*.

In this Case, your Reason exacts it from you, and so doth the common Reason of Mankind, that a Sense of common Interest, and common Danger, now quiet those Feuds, and extinguish those Fires, which our own Lusts first kindled, and the Devil and our common Enemies have incensed, to the great Damage and Hazard of the whole Protestant Cause.

Such a seasonable and becoming Sense as this, were in it self sufficient to cool a wise Mans heats, if Penal Laws were left standing in their full force and vigour; but when the Wisdom and Reason of the State shall plainly discern both the Usefulness and Necessity of Liberty, and thereupon take away (as they have now most prudently and seasonably done) the further occasions of mischief to the whole, by relaxing the Yoke that bound some (and those a very great Body of truly Loyal and Useful Subjects) leaving the rest in the quiet Possession of their own Liberties and Properties; what shall we call that Fire, which still continues burning and encreasing, not only after, but by all this, but an unquenchable Hell-fire?

If *Chimera's*, and self-created Jealousies, That some carnal Interests of ours are not so well secured to us under Liberty, as they were under Persecution and Tyranny; this were the right way to perpetuate Dissentions and Persecutions to the end of the World.

And

And now, Gentlemen, I hope I may say, without being vain or opinionative, that your own Reason hath fairly disarmed you of these Pleas and Excuses, by which you have hitherto defended your selves in your most sinful Practices of profane *Cursing*, and *Swearing*, *Drunkenness*, *Uncleanness*, and bitter *Enmity* against your Protestant Brethren for things that touch not the Essence of Christianity.

And believe it, Sirs, it is truly Genteel and Glorious, to suffer your selves to be subdued and conquered by the plain Convictions of your own Reason and Conscience. 'Tis ten thousand times more Honourable and Glorious to lay down your Arms at the feet of these, than to lay down both Reason and Conscience at the feet of Satan and your Lusts, and continue fighting obstinately against God, your own Souls, Bodies, Estates, Reputations; yea, your very Reasons and Consciences, your Innocent Brethren, and the Peace of Church and State, under Satan's Banner.

In all this Discourse, I have not designed to exasperate, but assuage and restrain your Lusts and Passions, by laying the loving and gentle hands of your own Reasons and Consciences upon them. I have not given the least Injurious touch to your Honour, but all along pleaded for the Recovery, or Security of it. I have exposed no Man by any particular Mark or Indigitation.

But now I have done with you; if your own Consciences shall begin to make a rounder and more particular Application of these general Reason-

Reasonings and Arguments, and say to you, as *Nathan to David*, *Thou art the Man*, I am not accountable for that. But be confident of it, you are accountable to God for all those plain Convictions and faithful Endeavours used with you, and tryed upon you, to save you from all those Miseries your head-strong Lusts with furious Precipitation are manifestly running you into.

If you can substantially and solidly refel those Arguments against, and vindicate those Pleas for Sin, which Reason and Conscience have urged and censured above; and can produce stronger and clearer Arguments to defend and justify the Courses here censured and condemned: Or if you can obtain a Writ of Error to remove these Causes to another lawful Court of Judicature, where you shall obtain a more favourable Verdict, your complaint of severe Dealing with you here, will not want some Ground or Colour: But if you cannot (as you know you cannot) then never blame your own Reasons, nor mine, for dealing Rigorously or Injuriously with you.

I am willing to hope, and perswade my self, that I shall at least obtain a Reformation of Life from many of you. I have tugg'd hard for it with you here. I will tug harder with God in Prayer to obtain it for you. But yet, Gentlemen, I must tell you in the close, That tho an external Reformation of these Evil Courses may make your Lives more healthy, happy, and durable in this World, and will greatly conduce to the publick, as well as your personal and private Interest; yet if you expect compleat and perfect Happiness

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Happiness in the World to come, you must advance one step further beyond Reformation, unto sound *Conversion*. The first makes you *comparatively* happy here; but the second will make you *perfectly* happy and blessed for ever hereafter. The first frees you from many *temporal* Miseries upon Earth; but the second from *eternal* Miseries in Hell. And this brings you to the other blessed Step, by *Conversion*, which is the Second Part.

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The Second Part:

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OF

Conversion to God,

The only Thing that makes Men truly happy, and perfectly blessed in the World to come.

By the same Author.

Iſa. 55. 7, 8. Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord.

Iſa. 1. 18. Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord; though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; tho they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.

1 Cor. 6. 11: And ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, &c.

L O N D O N:

Printed for Thomas Cockeril, at the Three Legs in the Poultry, over againſt the Stocks-Market. 1691.

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S E C T. I.

Conviction supposed, and Grace admired.

R *Reason and Conscience* have been shaming men out of their Prophaneness, in the former Part of this Discourse. *Free-grace* invites them to the Life of Holiness, and thereby to the Life of Blessedness in this *Second Part*.

There you see what it is to live like *Beasts*. *Here* you may see what it is to live like *Christians*.

My Charity commands me to suppose, that some Readers stand by this time convicted in their own Consciences, both of the extream wickedness, and the immediate danger of that prophane Course they have heitherto pursued, and persisted in. And that by this time they begin to interrogate them in the Apostle's close and cutting Language, *Rom. 6. 21. What fruit had ye then in*

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those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 'Tis hard to imagine, that so many close Debates and Reasonings as you have heard in the former Part, should not leave many of you under conviction and trouble of Spirit. You see your own Reasons and Consciences have condemned you; *And if our heart condemn us* (saith the Apostle) *God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things,* 1 John 3. 20. 'Tis folly to imagine, you shall be acquitted at God's immediate Bar, who are already cast and condemned at your own Privy Sessions.

If this be the happy effect (as I hope it is) of all the former close and solemn Debates with your Consciences, it will naturally and immediately cast thy Soul, Reader, into great admiration of, and astonishment at the patience and long-suffering of God, that hath born with thee, under a life of prodigious and reiterated provocations until this day. And his Goodness will be as admirable to thee, as his Patience; in that he hath not only suffered thee to live till this day, but made it the day of thy Conviction, the first necessary step towards thy Conversion: and the very first things he entertains thy convinced and troubled Soul with, to be the possibility and probability of thy Conversion to God.

The greatness of his Patience shews his Almighty Power, *Rom. 9. 22. Nahum 1. 3.* But his willingness to pass by all the wrongs you have done him, and to be at peace with you, discovers the immense riches of his grace, *Tit. 3. 3, 4.*

That God should be so quick in the executions of his wrath upon your Companions in sin, and so patient and long-suffering towards you, that have

have out-sinned them all, is such a comparative consideration of his bounty, as should even overwhelm the man that beholds it, *Rom. 11. 22. Behold the goodness and severity of God! on them that fell, severity; but towards thee goodness.*

If thou be that very man, who in the past course of thy Life, hast been a prophane Swearer, a beastly Drunkard, a lascivious person, an hater and persecutor of good men; and after all this, the Lord hath brought an offer of mercy to thy Soul, and shall convince thee it is not come too late, but that the Door of Hope stands yet open to thee; my advice to thee is, That thou cast thy self down at the feet of mercy, and after this manner pour forth thy laments and desires before the Lord.

“And is there yet a possibility of mercy, O Lord God, for such a vile wretch as I have been! Can the arms of Free-grace yet open themselves to embrace such a Monster of wickedness as I am! Who then is a God like unto thee! and what patience, mercy and goodness is like thine! I have far exceeded others in sin; I have lived the Life of a Beast, yea, of a Devil. I have darted thy dreadful and glorious Name with thousands of horrid Blasphemies, trampled all thy glorious Attributes under my feet; challenged thee to thy very face to do thy worst, even to damn me to the pit of Hell; I have yielded up this Soul with all its noble Faculties and Powers, as instruments of sin unto the Devil; and made this Body which should have been the hallowed Temple of thy Spirit, to be the noyful Sink or Common-Shore for all unclean and abominable Lusts to run and settle in. I have

" hated, reviled and persecuted those that were
 " more strictly sober and godly than my self, be-
 " cause their convincing-examples disquieted,
 " checked and convicted my Conscience in the
 " eager pursuit of my Lusts and Pleasures.

" I have lived in the prophane neglect of Pray-
 " er, Meditation, Self-reflection, and all other
 " spiritual Christian Duties, thinking to make an
 " atonement for all, by a few hypocritical ex-
 " ternal Formalities.

" To accommodate my carnal interest in the
 " world, I have come seeking hot out of an Ale-
 " House, or Whore-House, to the Table of the
 " Lord, where with unhallowed hands, and a
 " more unhallowed heart, I have crucified again
 " the Lord of Glory; and given the vilest affront
 " and despight to that most sacred and precious
 " blood, which now must save me, or I am lost
 " for ever. Thus have I done; and because
 " thou keptst silent, I thought thee to be alto-
 " gether such an one as my self. But this day hast
 " thou reproved me, and set mine abominations in
 " order before me.

" I have tempted and induced many others
 " into the same Impieties with me, of whom
 " some are already gone down to the dead; and
 " others so fixed, and fully engaged in the pursuit
 " of their Lusts, that there appear no signs of re-
 " pentance or recovery in them.

" Thy wrath, Lord, soon brake forth against
 " the Angels that sinned in Heaven; yet hither-
 " to hast thou forbore and spared me, who have
 " been highly provoking thee, ever since I was
 " born, by life of unparallell'd wickedness up-
 " on Earth. Vile wretch that I am! I have despir-
 " fed

“ sed the riches of thy goodness, forbearance,
 “ and long-suffering, not knowing that the good-
 “ ness of God leadeth me to repentance. And af-
 “ ter all, here I am told, that there is yet a possi-
 “ bility of pardon, mercy and salvation for me.
 “ The news is so great and so good, that I am ze-
 “ lously concerned to examine the grounds and
 “ evidences of it. And if it shall appear to be as
 “ true, as it is astonishingly strange and ravishing-
 “ ly sweet, I hope it shall effectually lead me to
 “ repentance, and dissolve for ever the strongest
 “ ties betwixt me and my lusts.

S E C T. II.

Conversion of the vilest Sinner possible.

THAT it is possible for the greatest and most infamous Sinner to be recovered by Repen-
 tance and Conversion, and thereupon to find mercy
 and forgiveness with God, is a truth as sure and
 firm, as it is sweet and comfortable. Three things
 will give full evidence of it.

1. That their Sins do not exceed the power and sufficiency of the causes of Remission.
2. That such Sinners are within the calls and invitations of the Gospel.
3. That such Sinners are found among the instances and Examples of pardoning mercy, recorded in the Scriptures.

And if the Causes of Pardon be sufficient, and able to produce it ; if the Gospel-invitations do take them in ; and such sinners as these, every way as vile and wicked, have not been shut out, but

received to mercy; then 'tis beyond all doubt that there is (at least) a possibility of mercy for such sinners as you are.

I. 'Tis past all rational doubt, that the Causes of Remission are every way sufficient and able to produce the forgiveness of such sins as yours are. For consider with your selves,

The power of } 1. The *Impulsive Cause*.
2. The *Meritorious Cause*.
3. The *Applying Cause*.

1. The sufficiency and ability of the *Impulsive Cause* of Pardon, which is none other but the *Free-grace* of God, the immense riches and treasures whereof, do infinitely exceed the accompts and computations both of Angels and Men, *Exod. 34. 6, 7.* And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. *Mic. 7. 18, 19.* Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy: He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the Sea. Once more, *Rom. 5. 20.* Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. So that whatever thy sins have been, they do not, they cannot exceed the ability and power of the Grace of God, the all-sufficient *Impulsive Cause* of Remission. That infinite Abyss or Sea of mercy can swallow up and cover such

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such mountains of guilt as thine have been.

2. Nor do thy sins exceed the power and ability of the *Meritorious Cause* of Remission, namely, *the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ*; for that Blood is the Blood of God, *Act. 20. 28.* He is the Lamb of God, whose blood is sufficient to take away the sins of the world, *John 1. 29.* There is but one sin in the world exempt from Remission by this blood; and if thy heart be now wounded with the sense of sin (as I here suppose it to be) that's none of thy sin, how heinous soever thy other sins be.

3. Nor do thy sins exceed the ability and power of the *Applying Cause* of pardon, namely, *the Spirit of God.* For though I should suppose thy *mind* to be clouded and overshadowed with grossest ignorance, thy *Heart* to be as hard as an *Adamant* or *Nether Mill-stone*, thy *Will* stiff and obstinate, thy *Affections* enchanted and bewitched with the pleasures of Sin; yet this Spirit of God in a moment can make a convincing beam of light to dart into thy dark *mind*, make thy hard *heart* relent, thy stubborn *will* to bow, and all the *affections* of thy Soul to comply, and open obedientially to Christ, *John 16. 9, 10. The Spirit, when he cometh, he shall convince the world of Sin, &c.*

Thus you see whatever your guilt be, it does not exceed the abilities of the *Causes* of Remission. Oh what an Encouragement is this!

II. And there is yet further Encouragement in this, that if you will open your *Bibles*, you may find your selves within the Calls and Invitations of the Gospel. And no man can say that man is without hope, that is within a Gospel-invitation.

on. Consider *Isa. 55. 7, 8. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon: for my thoughts are not your thoughts, &c.* Here you have the nature of Conversion described *Negatively* and *Positively*, by forsaking your ways and thoughts, and turning to the Lord, The way notes the external course of the Conversation; the *thoughts* denote the internal frame and temper of the Mind; both these must be forsaken. And *turning to the Lord*, denotes the sincere dedication of the whole man to God; all which is possible and easy for the Spirit of God to do; and this being once done, abundant Pardon is assured. If you say you cannot think it; God tells you in the very next words, That his thoughts are not your thoughts, but as far above them as the Heavens are higher than the Earth. Read to the same purpose, *Isaiah 1. 18, Rev. 3. 20. John 7. 37.*

III. And to make the possibility of Remission yet clearer, know for your encouragement, that as vile, infamous, and prodigious Sinners as your selves, are recorded and found amongst the instances and examples of forgiven sinners in Scripture. *Paul* was once a fierce and cruel Persecutor and Blasphemer, yet he obtained mercy, *1 Tim. 1. 13, 14.* That sinful *Woman* recorded *Luke 7. 37, 38,* was an infamous and a notorious sinner, yet her sins, which were many, were forgiven her, *v. 47.* *Manasseh* was a Monster of wickedness, as you may read, *2 Chron. 33.* yet found mercy. And if you view that Catalogue of sinners given in

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1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. you will seem to find among them the very forlorn-hope of desperate sinners, advanced nearest to Hell of any men upon Earth ; yet see ver. 11. what is said of some of them: *And such were some of you ; but ye are washed, but ye are justified.*

All these things plainly shew (I say not the Certainty that you *shall* be, but) the Possibility that you *may* be pardoned ; which is a mercy and encouragement unspeakable.

S E C T. III.

The Conversion of prophane ones highly probable.

AND because Satan labours to discourage them that are gone in sin so far as you are, by cutting off all hopes of mercy from them, and bringing them to this desperate Conclusion, Damned we know we shall and must be, and therefore as good be damned for more, as less. If we had lived sober and civil lives, we might have had some hope ; but because we have no hope, 'tis as good for us to take our full swinge in sin, as to think of returning by Repentance and Conversion, so late in the day as this is.

To obviate this deadly snare of Satan, I shall here further add, That there is not only a Possibility of your recovery, but in some respect a stronger Possibility, that such as you may be converted and saved, than there is for those that have led a smoother and more civil life in the world, and wholly trust to their own Civility for their salva-

tion, instead of the imputed righteousness of Christ.

This plainly appears by that convictive Expression of Christ to the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, *Mat. 21. 31. Verily I say unto you, That the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you. Publicans*, the most infamous among men, and *Harlots* the worst of women; yet these are sooner wrought over to Christ by Faith and Repentance, than the more civil and self-righteous *Scribes* and *Pharisees*.

And indeed 'tis far easier to come at the Consciences of such sinners by Conviction, than at the others. They have nothing to ward off the stroke of conviction: It must fall directly and immediately upon their Consciences. The most smooth and civil part of the world trust to their own righteousness, and this self-confidence, like *Armour of proof*, resists all attempts to bring them to Christ for righteousness. Nothing fixes men in a state of evil more, than a strong conceit that their Condition is good.

But such as you are, whose whole lives have been polluted with prophaneness and all impiety; your Consciences will more easily receive convictions of your present danger, and of the necessity of a speedy and thorow change. You cannot think as others do, that you need no Repentance or Reformation. In this respect, therefore, you lie nearer the Door of Hope and Mercy, than other Sinners do.

If therefore it shall please the Lord (whose grace is rich and free to the vilest of sinners) to pluck out such as you, as brands out of the burning, by thorough conversion to Christ, you will

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not only become real Christians (as all true Converts are) but the most excellent, useful and zealous amongst all Christians. As you will be most eminent Instances of his Grace, so will you be the most eminent Instruments for his Glory. As you have gone beyond other sinners in wickedness, so you will strive to exceed them all in your love to Christ, *Luke 7. 47. She loved much, for much was forgiven her.* You'll never think you can do enough for him, who hath done such great things for you.

Who more fierce and vile before Conversion, than *Paul*, who was a Blasphemer, a Persecutor and injurious, *1 Tim. I. 13*? And who among all the servants of Christ loved or laboured for him more than he? How did he rather fly, than travel up and down the world, in a flame of Zeal for Christ? As you have been *Ring-leaders* in sin, so you will not endure to come behind any in zeal and love to the Lord Jesus: Yet not thinking this way to make him a requital for the injuries you have done him (that would be the most injurious act of all the rest): But to testify this way the deep sense you have of the riches and transcendency of his goodness and mercy to you above others.

S E C T. IV.

Conversion frequently and fatally mistaken.

BUT here I must warn you of some common, but most dangerous Mistakes committed in the world with respect to Conversion unto God. Except these be seasonably prevented or removed, none of you will ever stir or move further than you are towards Christ. Amongst others, beware especially of these three following fatal Mistakes. That of

1. Baptismal Regeneration.
2. Common Profession of Christianity.
3. Formality in Religious Duties.

1. There is a notion spread among men, and almost every where obtaining, That the Scriptures mean nothing else by *Conversion*, but *to be baptized in our infancy into the visible Church*; and that this Ordinance having past upon them long ago, they are sufficiently converted already; and that men make but a needless stir and bustle in the world about any other or further Conversion.

But, Sirs, I beseech you consider how dangerous a thing it is to take your own Shadow for a Bridge, and venturing upon it drown your selves. If Baptism be Conversion enough, why doth Christ say, *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned?* Baptism without Faith signifies nothing to Salvation; but Faith without Baptism

tism (where it cannot be had) secures Salvation. And why doth the Apostle say, *Gal. 6. 15. Neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new Creature?* Or what needed Christ to have pressed and inculcated the indispensable necessity of Regeneration upon *Nicodemus*, as he doth, *Joh. 3. 3, 5, 7.* who had been many years a circumcised Jew? This your dangerous dependance upon your Baptismal Regeneration, is what hath given such deep offence and prejudice to many (though without just cause) against that Ordinance. I lament it as much as they, that men should turn it into such a deadly snare to their own Souls, yet will still honour Christ's abused Ordinance.

2. Some think the common profession of Christianity makes them Christians enough. They are no *Heathens*, *Mahometans*, or idolatrous *Papists*, but *Protestants*, within the Pale of the True Church, that is, professed reformed Christians.

But Friends, I beg you to consider, that convictive Text, *1Cor. 4. 20. The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.* Many there be, that in words confess Christ, but in works they deny him. And why were the foolish *Virgins* (that is, professed reformed Christians) shut out of the Kingdom of God, if the Lamps of verbal profession, without the Oyl of Internal Godliness, were enough for our Salvation? *Mat. 25. 3, 12.* Believe it, Sirs, many will claim acquaintance with Christ upon this account, and expect favour from him in the great day, of whom he will profess he never knew them, *Mat. 7. 22.* Christ need not have put men upon striving as in an Agony to enter in at the strait Gate, if Baptism in our Infancy, or Verbal Profession of Christianity were all the difficulties

sicilities men had to encounter in the way to Heaven.

3. *Formality in external Duties of Religion*, is another fatal mistake of Conversion. Have not these been the inward thoughts of your hearts; As bad as we are, though we take liberty to swear, be drunk, and unclean sometimes; yet we say our Prayers, keep our Church, and hope for Heaven and Salvation, as well as those that are more precise?

But tell me, *Gentlemen*, seriously, What do you say or plead for your selves more in all this, than those convicted Hypocrites did, *Isa. 58. 2.* *Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a Nation that did Righteousness; and forsook not the Ordinances of their God: They ask of me the Ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Or to come nearer yet to your Case, and cut off at one stroke for ever this vain Plea of yours, read and ponder God's own Censure of it, in Jer: 7. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit: Will ye steal, murder, commit Adultery, and swear falsely, &c. and come and stand before me in this House, which is called by my Name, and say we are delivered to do all these Abominations? Is this House which is called by my Name, become a Den of Robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord; but go ye now to my place, which was in Shilo, where I set my Name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel.*

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S E C T. V.

Of the Nature of true Conversion.

YOU have heard that Conversion does not consist in these External things; at your Eternal peril be it if you trust in them. But true Conversion is the turning of the whole man to God, *Acts* 26. 18. 'Tis nothing less than the total change of the inward temper and frame of the Heart, and the external course of the Life, *Isa.* 55. 8. 'Tis not the cold *Confession*, but the real forsaking of sin, in which we shall find mercy, *Prov.* 28. 13. Thy heart and will, love and delight must turn sin out, and take Christ in, or thou art no Gospel-Convert. A true Convert loaths every sin, and himself for sin, *Ezek.* 36. 31. But general Confessions of sin, are consistent with the full dominion of sin. Moreover, in all true Conversion there is a positive turning unto God, a whole heart-choice of him for your supreme and ultimate happiness and portion, *Psal.* 73. 25. And of the Lord Jesus Christ, as your Prince and Saviour, *Acts* 5. 31. And answerably it will devote your whole Life to his Service and Glory, *Phil.* 1. 21. And thus it brings forth the new man. And the whole Frame of your Heart and Life is marvellously changed and altered, *2 Cor.* 5. 17. *Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*

It may be you will think such a change as this impossible to be made upon you. And so it is indeed, until the day of God's power come, *Psalms*

110. 3: What! to forsake with loathing your old Companions and Courses, which you have so long lived with, and delighted in, and to embrace with highest pleasure strict Godliness, which you have so loathed and ridiculed! This would be a strange alteration indeed. But as strange as it seems to be, 'twill be effected in a moment, when God fulfils that gracious Promise (as I hope he is now doing) to you, *Ezek. 36. 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; Operations follow Natures.* When the heart of a Beast was given to that great King *Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 5. 21.* his dwelling was with the wild Asses, they fed him with Grass like Oxen. But let the Spirit of a man return to him again, and he'll blush to think of his brutish Company, and way of Life: And so will you of yours also. As marvellous a change as this has past upon as eminent and notorious sinners as your selves, *Gal. 1. 22.* the God of the Spirits of all flesh can with ease and speed produce all this by that Almighty Power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.

S E C T. VI.

Of the Hazards attending Conversion.

IF the Lord shall in his rich grace and mercy to your Souls stir up in them the thoughts and resolutions of a change of your course, great care ought to be taken in the time of this change, lest they miscarry in their remove from one State to another. Multitudes miscarry betwixt a State of
 Prophane-

Prophaneness, and true Godliness. To continue in the State of Prophaneness, is to be certainly lost; and so it is to take up short of Christ in meer Civility and Formality in Religion. This middle state takes up multitudes by the way, who do but change the open Road for a more private way to Hell.

Meer Civilized Nature is Unregenerated Nature still. *They return, but not to the most high; they are like a deceitful Bow, saith the Prophet, Hos. 7. 16.* They seem to aim at Christ and Salvation; but as an Arrow from a weak Bow, it goes not home; or as from a deceitful Bow, it slents aside, and misses the Mark. 'Tis true, they are not openly prophane, as they were before; but they take up, and settle in an Unregenerate State still. Their *Condition* is the same, tho their *Company* be not.

This is excellently set forth by our Saviour, *Matt. 12. 43, 44, 45.* The Devil may be cast out as a *prophane* Devil, and yet keep his propriety still as a *formal* Devil. The sense of that Text is well expressed by one in this Note upon it, That a restraint by Formality keeps the Devil's Propriety, and disposes the Soul to final Apostacy. You are as far from Christ and Salvation under the power of Formality, as you were before. He that's cured of a Fever, hath no great cause to rejoyce, if his *Fever* have left him under a *Consumption*, which will kill him as surely, though it may be less violently or speedily.

S E C T. VII.

Of the absolute Necessity of a thorow Change.

WHatever the Difficulties and Hazards be that attend this Change by Conversion unto God, the Change it self is absolutely and indispensibly necessary to every man's Salvation. The Door of Salvation can never be opened without the Key of Regeneration. Christ assures Civil and Formal *Nicodemus*, that except he be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God, *Job. 3. 3.* Think not Conversion to be the attainment of some singular and extraordinary Christians; for 'tis the very point upon which every man's eternal Happiness or Misery depends. There is one Law for all the world, They must be changed or damned. No Restitutions or Reformations, no common Gifts or Abilities, no Religious Duties or Services, can save any man from Hell without a Change by thorough Conversion, *Rom. 8. 8.* *They that are in the flesh, cannot please God.*

Satisfie and please not your selves with this; Though we live in sin, yet God is a merciful God; we will confess our sins to him, say our Prayers, keep our Church, and no doubt, but God will be merciful to us, as well as others. Consider it, man, that this *merciful God* is also a *God of Truth*, and this *God of Truth* hath plainly assured thee, That all these external things signifie nothing to thy Salvation, unless thou become a new Creature, *Gal. 6. 15.* And that thou must be born again, *John 3. 3.* Say not without this, you will hope

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hope in Gød. If you hope in God, you must hope in his Word, *Psalms* 119. 81. Now where will you find that Word in the Bible, that warrants the hope of Salvation in an unregenerate person? All Scriptural hope is of a purifying nature, and evermore productive of an holy life, *1 John* 3. 3.

If you say, Christ died for the greatest of sinners, and you trust to be saved through him: 'tis true he did so; but Conversion is his only method of Salvation, *Tit.* 2. 14. And those that are not washed by Sanctification, have no part in him, or in his Blood, *John* 13. 8. He came not to save men continuing in their sins, but to save his people from their sins, *Matt.* 1. 21. His way is to lead you through Sanctification unto Salvation, *2 Thess.* 2. 13. If you have a mind to see whom and how he saves, you have it before your eyes, *Tit.* 2. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Those only are saved by him, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live not only *soberly* and *righteously*, but *godly* in this present world.

And this is the Change I am here pressing you to: and until this change be made, you cannot find your selves within the compass of any Covenant-Promise, *Eph.* 2. 12. But if you will turn to *Heb.* 12. 14. You may the very next minute find your selves barr'd out of Heaven by a Scripture-threatning. Let no man therefore impose so great a cheat upon his own Soul, as once to imagine, that any thing short of sound Conversion, can ever put him out of the danger of Damnation.

S E C T. VIII.

Every man might do more than he doth towards his own Conversion.

IT is not in any man's power to convert himself: but yet because every man might do more towards it than he doth do, and doth it not, he is justly chargeable with his own Damnation. We are bid and bound to strive to enter in at the strait gate, *Luke 13. 24.* 'Tis true, a man in his natural state can do nothing that is spiritually or supernaturally good; yet he can do, and forbear to do many things, the doing or forbearing of which have a true, though remoter tendency to his Conversion; and not doing or forbearing of them, his Destruction is of, and from himself.

You can, if you will, forbear to swear and blaspheme the Name of God: who can or does compel or force your tongues to it? The Devil can tempt, but not compel them. You can, if you will, stop when nature is duely refreshed: Your wicked Companions can provoke, but not force you. You can, if you please, shun Lascivious Books and Company, and keep your Bodies chaste, at least from the External Acts of Uncleaness.

And why cannot you (if you please) perform, as well as neglect, the external Acts of Religious Duties? The same feet that carry you to a Tavern, can carry you to your Closets, if you please to have them do so. Nor do I know any reason why you cannot compose your selves, when engaged in

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in God's publick or private Worship, to a close and serious attendance to those Duties. The application of the mind to what is spoken, is of great concernment to you : And if an un sanctified Minister can apply his thoughts to compose a Sermon and preach it, I see no reason why an un sanctified Hearer may not also compose and apply his mind to hear it. And I am past all doubt, that something may be done beyond all this. You have some power certainly to reflect upon, and consider what concernment you have in the things you read or hear, and how they agree or disagree with your experience.

Now if men would but do this (which certainly they have a power to do) though they cannot convert themselves, yet hereby they would lie in the hopeful way of Converting Grace ; which is more than they could ever yet be perswaded to do. And though there be no positive certainty or assurance that Conversion and Salvation shall follow these Acts ; yet hope and probability are engagements enough. Hope sets all the World on work without Assurance. The *Plough-man* ploughs in hope, and the *Merchant* ventures in hope. Do but as much for your Souls, as these do for their Bodies.

S E C T.

S E C T. IX.

Temptations and Discouragements in the way of Conversion.

BUT here I expect to be encountered by all the policy and power of Hell. Satan and your own Lusts are in confederacy to turn away your minds from such Counsels and Perswasions as these. They will tell you, this is no proper season to mind your Conversion: 'tis either too soon, or too late. You have not yet had pleasure enough in sin, or so much as hath put you beyond all hope of mercy: That Religion is a melancholly thing, and if once you look that way, you'll never have a merry day or hour more, With a thousand such damps and discouragements.

But pray, Gentlemen, do so much at least for your Souls before you turn away your ear from the instructions of life, as to hear these matters examined. If they be not worth that, they are worth nothing.

I will suppose you in the flower and vigour of your Youth, and this dangerous season now nick'd with a more dangerous Temptation, that it is too soon to mind such serious Matters now: You have not yet had your full pleasure out of sin.

Need I to spend a word to refute and baffle such a Temptation as this? I doubt not but you yourselves can easily do it. Ask your selves, Sirs, if sentence of Death were pass'd upon you by Men (as it is by God, *John 3. 18. He that believeth not is condemned already*) would you think a Pardon could

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could come too soon? Be assured every bit of Bread you eat, is the Bread of the Condemned. You are in hazard of Hell every day and hour: There wants nothing but a Sword, a Bullet, a Shipwrack, or Disease (of which Multitudes wait on you every day) to put you beyond mercy, and all hopes of mercy. And can you get too soon (think you) out of this danger and misery? Oh, why do you linger any longer? The danger is too great and imminent to admit one hours longer delay.

And it is as strange and strong a delusion on the other side, to fancy it is now too late. The vanity and groundlessness of this hath been evinced in the *Second Section*, to which I refer you for full satisfaction.

And for the loss of your Pleasures by Conversion to God, that's the thinnest and silliest Pretence of all the rest. That's the same thing as to imagine it is to a Thirsty Man's loss, to leave the puddle-waters of a broken Cistern, to enjoy the Cristal Streams of a flowing Fountain: For the Pleasures of an Ale-house, Play-house or Whore-house, to be sweeter than the light of God's Countenance, the Comforts of his Pardon, or the lively Hopes of Glory with him in Heaven, of which you read, *1 Pet. 1. 8.*

Poor men! O that you did but once know what the Life of Holiness, and Dedication to God is; what the Seals, Earnest, and first Fruits of his Spirit are! how willingly and joyfully would you trample all the sordid Pleasures of Sin under your feet, to enjoy them!

S E C T. X.

Motives and Considerations perswading to Conversion.

THIS short Discourse shall wind up it self in Motives and Considerations to prevail with You, not onely to make the first Step out of Prophaneness to Civility; but the other necessary and happy Step too, for the Lord's sake, Gentlemen; that blessed Step beyond meer Civility, to serious Godliness.

Oh, that I knew what Words to chuse, and what Arguments to urge, that might possibly prevail with you! My Witness is in Heaven, I would do any thing within my power to procure your temporal and eternal Happiness. I beg you in the bowels of Christ Jesus, as if I were upon my bended knees before your feet, turn not away your eye or ear from these Discourses. Ponder and consider once and again what hath been rationally debated in the First Part, about your Reformation, and what hath and shall be offered in this *Second Part*.

" Oh, my God! thou that hast counted me faithful,
 " and put me into the Ministry; thou that hast inclined
 " my heart to make this attempt, and encouraged me
 " with hope that it shall not be in vain to all them that
 " read it, if it must be so to some; I beseech thee, lay
 " the hand of thy Spirit upon the heart and hand of
 " thy Servant, strengthen and guide him in drawing
 " the Bow of the Gospel, and directing the Arrows,
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*"that they may strike the Mark he aims at, even the
"Conviction and Conversion of lewd and dissolute sin-
"ners. Command these Considerations to stay and settle
"in their hearts, till they bring them fully over to thy
"self in Christ.*

I. Consideration.

And first, O that you would consider how the whole of your Life past hath been cast away in vain, as to the great end and business you came into the world for. You have breathed many Years, but not lived one Day to God. Your Consciences could never yet prevail with you to get out of the noise and hurry of the World, and go along with it into some private retiring-place to debate the state of your Souls, and think close (but for one hour) to such awful Subjects as God, Soul, Christ and Eternity, Heaven, Hell, Death and Judgment. Do you think, Gentlemen, that you came into this world to do nothing else but to eat and drink, sport and play, sleep and die? Ask your selves, I beseech you, whether the life you have hitherto lived, have looked to your own eyes like an earnest flight from Hell, and a serious pursuit of Heaven and Salvation? How much nearer are you got to Christ now, than you were when in your Cradles? The sweetest and fittest part of your life is past away in Vanity, and there's no calling one day or hour of it back again.

II. Consideration.

Consider, Gentlemen, for Christ Jesus sake, you have yet an opportunity to be eternally happy, if you will slight and neglect opportunities of Salvation no longer. The Door of mercy is not yet finally shut up. The Lord Jesus yet waits to be gracious to you. Such is his astonishing grace and mercy, he will pardon and pass by all that you have done against him; if now after all you will but come unto him that you may have life. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? Your Swearing and Blaspheming, your Drunkenness, Uncleaness and Enmity at Godliness, shall never be mentioned, if you will yet repent and return, *Ezek. 18. 21, 22. If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.*

If you say, these are hard and impossible terms to Nature. 'Tis true they are so; and God's end in urging them here upon you, is to convince you of your natural impotence, and drive you to Christ, that by union with him, the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in you.

III. Consideration.

Let it be thoroughly considered, 'Tis no less than Salvation, and your own Salvation too, which depends upon your Conversion. How diligent was Christ in purchasing Salvation! How negli-

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negligent and remiss are we in applying it! Oh, what compositions of sloth and stupidity are unconverted Sinners! How do they sit with folded arms, as if it were easy to perish? Is this your running and striving to obtain the Palms and Crowns of Immortal Glory? *Work out* (saith the Apostle Phil. 2.12,13.) *your own salvation with fear and trembling.* 'Tis for Salvation, and nothing less, you are here pressed to strive And what care, pains, or solicitude of ours can be equal and proportionate to so great a thing as salvation? If every thought of the heart were rescued from all other concerns, and the mind stand continually fixed with utmost intention upon this Subject, surely such a Subject deserves it all, and much more.

But when you consider it is not an other's, but your own Salvation you are striving for, how powerfully should the Principle of Self-preservation awaken and invigorate your utmost endeavours after it! The Law of Charity and Bowels of Mercy would compel us to do much to save the Body, and much more the Soul of another; and will they move us to do nothing for our own Salvation?

Say not, if I should be careless and neglective, yet God is good and gracious; if this Season be neglected, there be more to come. Alas! that's more than you know. 'Tis possible your Eternal Happiness may depend upon the improvement of this present opportunity. There's much of time in a short opportunity.

IV. Consideration.

Do you think your hearts would be in such a dead, careless and unconcerned frame, about this

Great and awful matter of your Conversion and Salvation, if those things were now before your eyes, which certainly and shortly must be before them?

How rational and necessary is it for you now to suppose those very things, as present before you, which you know to be near you, and a few Days or Hours will make present? Here let me make a few Suppositions, so rational, because certainly future and near, that no wise man will or dare to slight them as Fictions or *Chimæra's*.

I. Supposition.

Suppose your selves now upon your Death-beds, your heart and breath failing, your eye and heart-strings breaking, all Earthly Comforts failing and shrinking from you; These things, you know, are unavoidable, and must shortly befall you, *Eccles.* 8. 8. Suppose also in these your last Extremities, your Consciences should awake (as probably they will, there being now no more Charms of Pleasure, and sinful Companions to divert or stupify them) what a case will you then find your selves in! What a cold sweat will then lie upon your panting bosoms! What a pale horror will appear in your countenances? Will you not then wish, Oh that the time I have spent in vanity, had been spent in the Duties of serious Piety! Oh that I had been as careful of my Soul as I was of my Body! What are the pains of Mortification, which I was so afraid of, to the pains of Damnation, which I begin to scent and apprehend! I thought it hard to pray, mourn, and deny my self

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self, but I shall find it harder to grapple with the Wrath of an incensed God to all Eternity.

II. *Supposition.*

Suppose your selves now to be at the Judgment-Seat of God, where you know you must be immediately after Death; or that you did behold the Process and awful solemnity of the general Judgment of the great Day, both which appearances are indisputably sure and certain, *Heb. 9. 27. 2 Cor. 5. 10.* Suppose you saw all *Adam's* Posterity there assembled and convened, even Multitudes, Multitudes, which no man can number; all these separated into two grand Divisions; Christ the Supream and final Judge upon the Judgment-Seat, the Christless and Unregenerate World quivering at the Bar, the last Sentence pronouncing on them, the Executioners standing ready to take them away: will you not then (think you) be ready to tear your selves with indignation for this your supine and sottish carelessness? A Voice from the Throne, like the Voice of a Trumpet, sounds a loud Alarm to all Careless, Negligent and Trifling Sinners; and this is the Voice, if you will not be in the same case with the miserable condemned World. Put to it heartily then in the use of all means with God and Men, for converting and regenerating Grace *now*, which is the only thing that differences your state from those miserable Wretches *then*.

III. *Sup-*

III. *Supposition.*

Suppose God did but give you a fore-sight or fore-taste in the Terrors of your Consciences of that Damnation you have jested at, and so often imprecated upon your selves; did you but lie one Night in that Plight poor *Spiras* and many others beside him have done, with the terrors of the Lord upon your spirits, under horror and remorse of Conscience, which are the first nibblings and bitings of that Worm that shall never die,

——— *Tum pallida mens est,
Criminibus, tacitâ sudant. præcordia culpâ.*

Paleness and horror, fear and trembling upon the outward and inward man, whilst God is making the immediate impressions of his wrath upon the Conscience; seeming to want some one to let out that miserable wretched Soul, that is weary to stay any longer in the Body, and yet afraid to be dislodged, lest its Condition be made worse by the exchange; do you think you would ever imprecate Damnation any more? and yet all these terrors and horrors upon the Conscience are but as the sweating of *Marble-Stones* before the great Rain fall.

But what if God should give you a Vision of Hell it self, and of the inconceivable and unexpressible misery of those desperate and forlorn Wretches, that lie there sweltring and groaning under the heavy pressures of the wrath of a great and terrible God, immediately and everlastingly transacted upon their Souls? would you ever jest with Damnation any more, as with an harmless thing?

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thing? Nay, would you not strive to the uttermost to flee from this wrath to come? Do you not seem to hear in this rational and just Supposition, a doleful Cry coming from Hell, and the state of the Damned, with this very Sound and Sense; Good Souls, if ever you expect to be delivered from this state and place of Torments, strive to the utmost, strive while you have opportunity, strive whilst breath and strength do last, to flee from, and escape by sound Conversion this doleful state of Eternal Damnation.

IV. *Supposition.*

Lastly, and in a word; Suppose you had a Vision of Heaven, as *Stephen* and *Paul* had in the Body; suppose you saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand, surrounded with the triumphant *Myriads* of Palm-bearing Saints, singing *Hosanna's* and *Allelujab's* to God and the Lamb for ever, and blessing, praising and admiring him, that gave them another spirit vastly different from that which governs such as you; blessing the Lord that enabled them to be praying and praising, whilst others were cursing and swearing; to be sighing and groaning for sin in secret, whilst others were shouting and singing in Taverns and Ale-houses; to beat down their Bodies, and keep them under, whilst others were pleasing and gratifying their Lusts; would you still drive that course you do? Well, Sirs, if ever you expect to come where these blessed ones are, you must take the course they did. Let this be your endeavour, and it shall be my fervent and hearty Prayer.

FINIS.

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